

MISCELLANIES,
IN
PROSE AND VERSE,

BY
EDWARD GARDNER.

VOL. I.

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TO
EDWARD JENNER, M.D. F.R.S.

A GENTLEMAN

EMINENTLY SKILLED IN HIS PROFESSION,

AND IN

THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURE,

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED,

AS A TESTIMONY

OF THE GRATEFUL ESTEEM

ENTERTAINED FOR HIM

BY THE AUTHOR,

WHO

FOR NEAR TWENTY YEARS HAS BEEN HONOURED

BY HIS

FRIENDSHIP.

FOR THE JOURNAL, M. D. V. S.

A GENTLEMAN

THE JOURNAL OF THE

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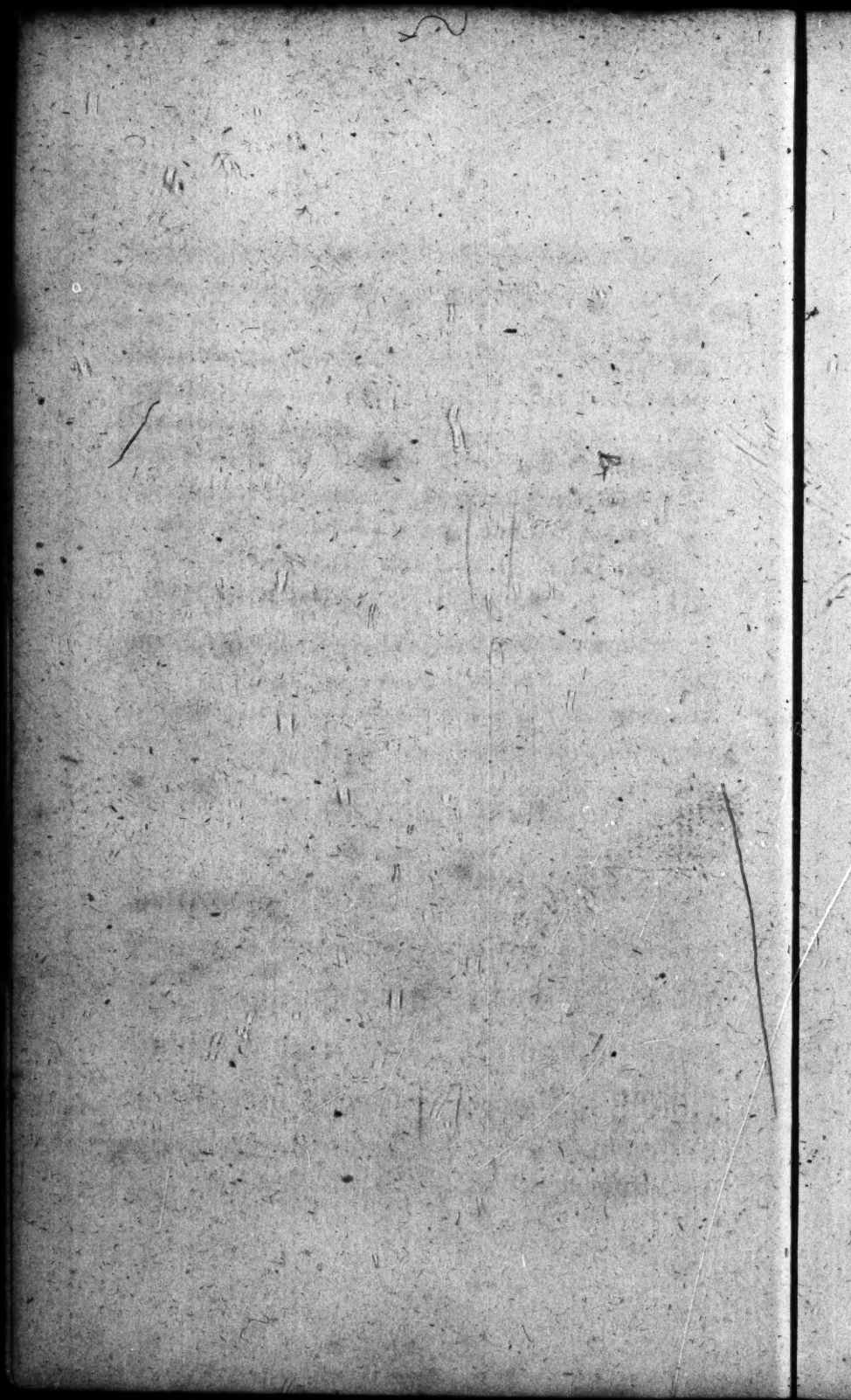
FOR THE JOURNAL OF THE

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ESSAYS.

THE NECESSARY PRECEDENCE
OF THE
PROGRESS OF LITERATURE,
TO THAT OF
CIVIL LIBERTY;
AND THEIR MUTUAL CONNECTION,
ILLUSTRATED BY
A SHORT VIEW OF THE OUTLINE OF THE
HISTORY OF EUROPE.

TO trace the progressive improvement of human knowledge is among the most pleasing, as well as the most useful employments of the mind. The pages of History contain a detail of the moral movements of human intellect. These are the pages of instruction. In the dark and early ages

of the world the scene is enveloped in the mists of obscurity, while a feeble ray of light sometimes breaks through the general gloom. The heart ever the same, amidst vicious or absurd national customs, will frequently display its natural propensities ; but a general diffusion of knowledge must be the work of ages. The progress is slow, often checked by the ravages of war, the ferocity of barbarism, and the ignorance or cunning of superstition.

The state of manners and customs, civil and political, the excellence or imperfection of laws, evidently run parallel with the existing state of knowledge.* The legis-

* Most nations owe their origin either to conquest or colonial emigration. Laws in their primitive state, are generally nothing more than grafts on the customs of the Aborigines, and the new settlers

lator must proportion his labors to this standard, for if he rise above, or sink below it, the general understanding of the people will divest him of his dignity, as soaring into visionary refinement, or degenerating into superannuated barbarism; nor will the intrinsic rectitude of his ideas avail him: to the benefits of the former they will be utterly insensible—the latter, from corruption, they will despise.

Every improvement in the widely extended circle of knowledge, whether in Ethics, Theology, or Mathematics; every

who have associated together: hence they are commonly found to be of a mixed kind. We should find a difficulty in accounting for their different complexions on any other ground. Thus the Normans revived the old laws of Edward the Confessor, and blended them with their own institutions. In this respect our laws very much resemble our language.

advance of the useful or elegant arts towards perfection, must arise in the emancipation from that slavery under system and opinion,* supported by prescription only, which so engages the mind.

The noble arts of Eloquence, History, and Poetry, declined with the illustrious republics of Greece and Rome. The nervous oratory of the Forum degenerated into servile flattery, when the speaker no longer possessed a property in the government. Little spirit and impartiality could that narration possess, which was written under powerful impressions of fear of the present, and of hatred of the departed tyrant. The genius of the herd of men

* How long was the philosophy of Europe enslaved by Aristotle, till Lord Bacon broke the chain!

insensibly moulds itself to the character of its age,* and widely different is the enthusiastic from the emasculated lay of slavery. Manly strength, and grandeur of sentiment, are not the characteristics of modern Italian poetry.

It would be to little purpose to trace the progress of general literature and liberty in the ferocious times of the Goths, Lombards, and Normans. Christianity was almost uniformly the object of attention. The light derived from Athens, (where the afterwards popular Boëthius planted himself in the sixth century), from the

* For the GENIUS, which by its single and simple energies *changes* the character and current of an age, must be excepted.

Roman See, from the Saracens in Spain, the literary efforts of Charlemagne, and Alfred,* were principally directed to the service of the same cause. Even before this period we may trace in the history of our own country, some dying sparks of scientific light, which feebly illuminated the dusky gloom; and while we resort to the Saxon æra for the origin of our Parlia-

* The early part of the reign of Alfred presents a most deplorable picture of universal ignorance; yet the manly vigor of his genius prompted him to kindle a ray of light, which not only enlivened the barbarous gloom of the age, but has continued to give a fixed and steady brilliance to the polished manners of the present day. The virtue of Antoninus, the learning and valour of Cæsar, and the legislative genius of Lycurgus, shone forth united in that patriot King. Several of his institutions have survived the Norman conquest, and contributed to form the English Constitution.

See Gibbon's outlines of the History of the World.

ments, we may there find proofs of literature by no means despicable.*

* A collection of Books was begun at Wiremouth and Yarrow in Northumberland, comprizing a great variety of volumes in all the departments of literature; it was purchased at Rome, and imported into England about the year 676, for which near two thousand acres of land were given in exchange. A larger library than this was established within sixty years afterwards at York, containing copies of the Hebrew scriptures, all the Fathers, and all the Greek and Roman writers, being the greatest repository of books, in all branches of knowledge that was any where known in Europe.

Whitaker's Hist. of Manchester. vol. 2.

In the seventh century also Theodorus, a native of Greece, being consecrated at Rome as Archbishop of Canterbury, departed for England. He found the people in a state of the grossest ignorance, and endeavoured to the utmost of his power to instruct them. He erected a School at Cricklade, in Wiltshire, where was taught Divinity, Music, Arithmetic, Astronomy, Greek and Latin.

Rapin.

Albert, Archbishop of York, when master of the

The spirit of the feudal system is equally unfavorable to liberty and to letters; and the history of this kingdom to the fifteenth century, contains little more than the detail of the merciless tyranny of the rich and strong over the poor and weak. Despotism resided in the crown, only prevented from crushing the people by the interference of the barons, whose interest was intimately blended with that of their vassals. These haughty chieftains lived immured in their dark and gloomy castles, which they left not for a moment, but for the savage purposes of rapine or murder.

grammar-school at that place, in the year 767, taught grammar, rhetoric, poetry, astronomy, natural philosophy, and divinity.

Beutham's Hist. of Ely. p. 25.

Scarce able to write, and little acquainted with the rudiments of knowledge, they were most of them immersed in a barbarous ignorance, where the mind wallowing in its native mire, rarely forms one true idea of utility, justice, or humanity : It had no other notion of greatness than a romantic opinion of military glory ; which, however, it must be confessed, was often kindled by an herculean desire of redressing wrongs, and of protecting the weak.—Instead of enlarged speculations upon the philosophy of nature, and of man, the principles of commerce, the rights of nations, the great interests of humanity, the administration of governments, the theories of the elegant and useful arts, studies which tend to universal improvement ; the dignified human mind was confined to the casuistry of civil

and canon law, the quibbles of scholastic divinity, the fallacies of judicial astrology; to legendary fiction, tasteless limning, infantile grammar, jejune history, culinary medicine, visionary alchemy, and insipid postillating. The ridiculous and contemptible picture is alone relieved by the beautiful arts of architecture and music.*

* This general character of the feudal system by no means applies to the beautiful appearance which it exhibited at its first establishment; it certainly existed in this island before the Norman conquest. William did not introduce, but adopted and transmitted a mode of tenure, which he found established in the kingdom he invaded. It existed in England during the Anglo-Saxon period, and in particular under Edward the Confessor; but it was a system then in its infancy, and adorned with harmony and peace. It was founded on mutual attachment between the lord and his dependants; but this golden age of chivalry was soon closed. The Norman con-

The simple narrative of the desolating ferocities and strange puerilities of the middle ages, would alone prove the barbarous and uncultivated state of human intellect.* If it needed illustration, a

quest introduced a dreadful disorder into the system, which increasing under the succeeding reigns, at length precipitated (what every oppressive system must precipitate) its own destruction.

* John, Earl of Worcester, in the reign of Edw. IV. was one of the first Barons who attained any eminence in literature; he was followed by Anthony Earl Rivers, beheaded at Pontefract Castle by Richard III. John Bouchier, Baron of Berners, and governor of Calais, flourished in the time of Henry VII. These were succeeded in the next reign by Henry Lord Stafford, William Lord Mountjoy, skilled in chymistry and mathematics, and the gallant Henry Howard, Earl of Surry, the reviver of English poetry, and the passionate adorer of the fair Geraldine.

See Walpole's Catalogue of royal and noble Authors.

luminous one may be found in that abject superstition which drew over the senses of the people its dark and gloomy curtain. Wonderful and extensive must have been that influence, which from motives of self-defensive policy forced the magnanimous HENRY to creep an humble suppliant at the footstool of the papal throne, and twice plucked the crown from the head of the haughty JOHN !

No chains are so firmly rivetted as those of superstition ; but the mind, restless under their pressure, will at some period burst them asunder. After an empire which continued more than seven hundred years over the whole christian world, the authority of the Roman pontiff was thrown off by a large part of Europe ;* enthusiasm occu-

* It is a curious fact that the downfall of the papal authority in England, was predicted even in the very

pied by superstition. The perseverance of LUTHER, and the furious zeal of the Genevese Reformer, effected an instantaneous change in the sentiments of mankind; deterred by no difficulty, dismayed by no danger, they boldly leaped over every pale with which the characteristic subtilty of the papal politics had surrounded its interested and fraudulent doctrines.

The mental faculties, unsupported and unassisted, might have been unequal to the task of emancipation; but the gradual progress of knowledge had prepared them

zenith of its power—the reign of the third Henry. The Pope was highly offended with the letters which the excellent Robert Grostede, Bishop of Lincoln, had sent to him, respecting his oppressions. The Cardinals advised him to suppress his resentment: “*sub it*”
 “*was known that at length there would be a departure*
 “*from their Church.*”

Speed, p. 830.

for this exertion. The art of printing which took place about the middle of the fifteenth century, had contributed to give an expansion to the understanding, no longer to be duped by the fear of excommunications and interdicts, those mummeries of the holy see. Objects were no longer seen through the mists of bigotry, nor the opaque medium of ignorance; and perhaps the spirit of liberty derived additional strength from those classical productions which the learned Greeks, who fled from the destruction of Constantinople about this æra, introduced with their beautiful language into Italy.

The revival of letters,* and the reformation took place at the same moment.

* The mechanical means by which this was effected, was translation.

Warren's Hist. of Eng. Poetry. Vol. i. p. 342.

The eighth Henry, resolute, obstinate and revengeful, was born for ardent enterprize. He was headstrong and furious in the gratification of his passions. The spiritual thunders of the holy Pontiff, already weakened by the general sense of his oppressions, by the opposition of preceding Kings, the statutes of provisors and premunire, and the diffusion of Wickliffism, were regarded as feeble enemies by a prince who suffered nothing to controul his favorite passions "the love of pleasure and the love of sway."

The character of Henry was peculiarly formed by nature for an enterprize, which required no small share of courage and perseverance; even those who might from humanity disapprove, or from suffering condemn, the severity of his measures, were compelled to confess that he had

intellect to conceive, and spirit to execute, the most arduous and difficult designs ! Yet the daring magnanimity of his genius, would have sunk under the pressure of the heavy clouds of ignorance, which hung over the horizon of the remoter ages ; but the progress of knowledge happily coincided with the views of the Monarch, whose subjects were as willing to receive, as he was to bestow, an emancipation from papal tyranny.

Whilst the mind was gradually preparing itself for bearing with a steady eye those luminous beams, which were to burst upon it from the sun of the reformation ; whilst Europe was on the eve of undergoing the most violent revolutions ; the same æra was productive of events which changed the character of a great people, and by the increase of the commercial spirit of rival

nations stamped a new impress upon the human mind. The adventurous *de Gama* doubled the cape of Good Hope, and succeeded in the arduous enterprize of navigating an European ship in the Indian ocean. At the same æra *Columbus* discovered a new world in the western hemisphere, prodigious in its extent, happy in its universality of climate, and replete with immense treasures, vegetable and metallic; and whilst the rich commodities of India poured wealth into the ports of John II. the mines of Mexico and Peru added splendor to the fame of Charles V.†

† Vasco de Gama with the Portuguese Fleet, doubled the Cape of Good Hope, at the latter end of the fifteenth century, and Columbus, about the same time, discovered America for the Spaniards. De Gama was commissioned by Emanuel; and Columbus sailed under the auspices of Ferdinand

But it was the ultimate tendency of these vast acquisitions, by the copious introduction of adventitious wealth into Spain, to enervate there that vigor of industry which is the main spring of national felicity, and to transfer to other nations the cultivation of the lands, the more natural and less detrimental source of opulence.* Yet these acquisitions of wealth were insufficient to check the ardent spirit of liberty, which broke out soon after this period in a part of the Spanish dominions, and animated

and Isabella. The effects of these acquisitions could not be felt until the succeeding reigns: Charles, afterwards Emperor, succeeded his grandfather as King of Spain in 1516; and John ascended the throne of Portugal in 1520. Cortez began the conquest of Mexico in 1519, and Pizarro effected that of Peru about 1530.

* Smith's Wealth of Nations.

the princes of Nassau, who in a war of 40 years nobly defended the cause of suffering humanity against the intimidating cruelties of Alva.† In this arduous struggle against the efforts of the most potent Monarch of Europe, the house of Bourbon was triumphed over by that of Orange, and the most flourishing commercial republic was erected that memory can trace in the annals of Europe.

The improvement of the arts and sciences, and the diffusion of literary ardor accompanied or rather preceded these struggles for civil liberty; nothing tends more to break

† The Prince of Orange gave battle to the Duke of Alva, the Spanish General, and was defeated. The Duke retook some towns, and treated the inhabitants with the greatest cruelty; he boasted that during an administration of six years, he had caused eighteen thousand to be hanged.

the fetters which sophistry fastens upon ignorance, than an enthusiastic thirst for literature: the light diffused by these studies strikes like lightning upon the mind, and disposes it to that freedom of enquiry, which necessarily enables it to throw off the trammels of superstition. The reign of the Tudors was favorable to the growth of genius; and the names of SPENSER, SHAKESPEAR, and BACON adorn that literary character of the age, which a general cultivation of classical learning, had previously constituted.

The mind loosed from the prison of ignorance, soon felt its consequence, and by a common transition, leaped at one bound from the darkest and deepest pits of superstition to the highest pinnacle of puritanic enthusiasm. The same spirit which glowed in the bosom of the fanatic,

kindled the flame of liberty, and the cool, cunning, sagacious CROMWELL triumphed at once over the fortunes of the unhappy CHARLES, and of those popular rights which he professed to defend.

Literature, with some few illustrious exceptions,* made no progress during this era of pretended liberty : wholly engrossed by the discussion of polemic mysteries, the mind was encompassed by a darkness, which the light of the elegant arts, incompatible with a system stigmatizing as vicious the amenities of life, could not penetrate. The chief science of the age was the de-

* MILTON, WALLER, SELDEN, CLARENDON, and the learned few, who withdrew from the troubles of the times to Oxford : and by forming themselves into a Philosophical Club, laid the foundation of the Royal Society.

struction of Popery by analysis, formerly effected synthetically. The object in view was to clarify the Church of all feculent matter; but it produced nothing more than an evaporation of the decencies of religion, and a spirit too subtil and refined for general use; yet the awkwardness of the chymical process did not produce this spirit pure, but adulterated with a considerable portion of of intolerance and hypocrisy.

The idea that knowledge and liberty are mutually connected is proved by this part of English history. True science languished,* and freedom was extinct; for no tyrant was

* Harrington's Oceana, and Hobbes's Leviathan, are exceptions. The political rubbish, the quibbling poetry, the silly astrology, and the cobweb refinements of puritanism, have deservedly been sunk in irrecoverable oblivion.

ever more despotic, than that haughty, unfeeling, rapacious, self-created Monarch who assumed the title of "*Protector of the commonwealth.*"

The downfall of this system of usurpation by the event which took place on the twenty-ninth of May, 1660, revived the drooping spirit of literature; and though the cause of religion and morality derived very feeble support from the influence and character of CHARLES yet he was friendly to the Muses. The elegant arts, particularly Architecture, painting, and experimental Philosophy, cultivated at this time with an ardent enthusiasm, arrived at an astonishing degree of comparative perfection.† The

† By the labors of Sir Christopher Wren, Sir Peter Lely, Thornhill; Sir Isaac Newton, &c. The Royal Society was incorporated in this reign.

passions of mankind ever prone to extremes have however thrown a shade over the history of this æra, in the propagation of the slavish doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance.

But it is from the Revolution, that the present enlarged spirit of philosophical freedom must date its origin. Knowledge made a rapid progress through the regions of Europe, when the dangerous bigotry of JAMES made this step necessary to the happiness, to the dignity, and to the character of a free, spirited, and enlightened people.

Liberty of every kind was now fixed on a broad and solid foundation. The act of toleration struck off those religious fetters which a mistaken unchristian zeal had too closely rivetted. The point of perfection to which letters arrived at this period may be conceived by the appellation which it

has familiarly taken of "*the Augustan æra.*"

The political, philosophical, and polemical tracts, published at this time, exhibit a range of thought, a perspicuity of diction, and a freedom of opinion, which are the sure attendants on security. These excellencies from the revolution to the present day, have been making rapid advances towards perfection. The literature of our times is characterized by a remarkable accuracy and precision, very different from the lax and indefinite mode of expression, which marks the style of preceding ages. The principles upon which philosophical researches are conducted, have been insensibly mingled with works of elegance, moral instruction, and taste. This precision is totally unlike the distinctions of scholastic learning; for it is not nomi-

ratio does not consist of trifles.

nal and arbitrary, but founded on nature and experience. Modern times may oppose with triumph the close argumentation of Paley to the looseness of Cicero. They may also claim the invention of a new science in the picturesque of Gilpin.

The enlarged system of education, and the general appetite for reading, have been the means of opening sources of information, to which the mind was formerly denied access. Left to its native liberty, human intellect has roved at large through the intricate mazes of metaphysical philosophy, the tangled briars of polemical controversy, and over the verdant lawns of poetry. Beautiful specimens of excellence in every branch of literature and science are every day exhibited; specimens which prove that Liberty and Knowledge are necessary to the existence of each other.

But when the predestinarian indifference of the disciples of Mahomet, the stubborn bigotry of the Gentoos, or the conceited obstinacy of the Chinese will be overcome, and whether established habits sanctioned by venerable antiquity, and guaranteed by important interests, will be able to cope successfully, with the increased self-importance, the elevation of views, the contempt of forms, the expansion of mind, the more lively sensibility to abuses, the bold spirit of resistance, and the strong propensity to reduce things to the standard of truth and justice, which in other times have united the progress of Liberty with that of Knowledge, in a ratio nearly equal to the career of improvement;—these are events as yet enveloped in the womb of time.

Yet I should hesitate to affirm, that the sum of human happiness has increased in an equal proportion to the progress of liberty and knowledge.

THE
P O E T R Y
OF
G R A Y.

WHEN the Booksellers applied to Dr. Johnson, to undertake the composition of critical and biographical prefaces to the works of the British Poets, they were probably influenced by the eminence of his character, and by a persuasion that what *he* did, could not be ill done. Yet Johnson (with reverence be it spoken) appears to have had few ideas of Poetry, beyond nervous, sententious couplets, interspersed

with a few loose metaphors and images. He seems not to have considered, that it should be confined to individual objects, especially to those of a picturesque kind, and applicable to the sense of vision,* that general expressions should be avoided, and a peculiar appropriate language be adhered to; ‡ that abstract qualities should be clothed in corporeal attributes, aptly and poetically imagined, † that the personification, or allegoric figure, should be indistinct, so as to keep in the back-ground, and not to destroy the appearance of probability; ‡ that the epithet should be sparingly used, || and convey a separate idea.

we did, could not be done. Yet John-

* Darwin's loves of the plants. Vol. 2, Notes.

‡ Wharton's essay on Pope; Stuart's Philos. human mind.

† Wharton's Hist. Eng. Poetry.

‡ Darwin's ut supr. || Wharton's Hist. Eng. Poet.

Yet these, however they may have escaped the notice of Johnson, are constituent principles of Poetry ; and though we find in his prefaces, no allusions to the production of the "*Ideal presence*," yet the creation of it is one of the specific ends of the art.*

If we try Gray by these principles, we shall find him entitled to the praise of a true poet. Johnson's sneer at his style, as approaching to the bombast, with the application of "*Double double, toil and trouble*," is invidious to the last degree. Perhaps there never was a Poet, in whom the magnificent was less mixed with the bombast ; and we may with equal truth affirm that the Biographer displayed more

*Darwin ut supr.

acrimony of censure, and more puerility of ridicule in his criticism on the works of Gray, than in any of the others which constitute the work. Are we to trace the cause of this disgusting partiality, to the poetical character of the author of "*The Bard*," and his own? This accounts for it on the principle of self love.

JOHNSON'S poems are the effusions of a masculine mind, energetically delivering moral truths, which would have appeared to more advantage, had they been expressed in that peculiar and vigorous language which constitutes the style of his prose compositions, but which with a laborious toil, yet with a happy imitative skill,* he

* If we attentively examine the Style of "*London*," and "*The vanity of human wishes*," we may discover a strong imitation of the satirical manner of POPE.

has dragged into verse. Gray, with all the fire which marks the poetical character, has succeeded in transporting the soul of the reader beyond the limits of common reflection, and in kindling the rapturous glow of exquisite feeling. Johnson possessed great vigor of intellect, which was chiefly employed in unlimited researches into the general nature of the human mind; Gray's attention was exclusively directed to its sublime, its beautiful, its pleasing, and its tender.

The Critic's censure on the prospect of Eton College, is playfully severe. The address to Father Thames to tell who
 "Now delight to cleave"
 "With pliant arm the glassy wave,"
 strongly displays that tenderness of soul which generally accompanies Genius. The Poet had delighted in boyish sports; the

remembrance of them had produced a soothing pleasure; and the wish to know who among his successors at Eton partook of the same diversions, is highly natural. When Johnson tells us that "*Father Thames had no better means of knowing than himself,*" he displays a surliness of language, and a contemptible proof of his critical taste. The question, if admitted to be unjustly put, would destroy a very considerable portion of the poetical beauties of SPENCER, SHAKESPEAR, and MILTON.

It would be tedious to follow Johnson through all his reprehensions of Gray: that the latter was without faults cannot be affirmed; but the severity of the Biographer has converted the most trifling errors into crimes of magnitude, and has labored to transform many sublime passages into "*cumbrous splendor, and distorted figure.*"

The poems of Gray display the polish of a beautiful correctness, worthy of praise and imitation, nor does it ever lead him into stiffness or formality. He possessed a pure and exquisite taste in the fine arts, The beautiful image of

"With arms sublime that float upon the air,

"In gliding state she wins her easy way."

was probably borrowed from painting; from which captivating art, many of his ideas are evidently drawn.

Can we refuse the praise of magnificence to the following lines :

— "Down the eastern hills afar
"Hyperion's march they spy, and glittering shafts
of war."

Does the mere use of the classical word "Hyperion," justify the critic's illiberal sneer at it ?

Under what an exquisitely beautiful figure is the voluptuous magnificence of RICHARD the Second's reign described—

"Fair laughs the morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
 "While proudly riding o'er the azure realm,
 "In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
 "Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm."

And how aptly is the picture finished with

—— "The sweeping whirlwind's sway,
 "That hush'd in grim repose, expects his ev'ning
 prey."

GRAY was eminently qualified to excel in the tender style, of which numberless instances might be produced; we will content ourselves with one. The heart that does not *feel* the soothing swell of pensive melancholy from this line,

"And pity dropping soft the sadly pleasing tear,"
 must be insensible to the effect of genuine poetry.

The Stanza of the Bard beginning

"On a rock whose haughty brow"

is commended with faint praise by Johnson; therefore we do not hazard the danger of differing from him, if we are profuse of our admiration of its six concluding lines :

"Hark how each giant Oak, and desert Cave,
 "Sighs to the torrent's awful voice beneath :
 "O'er thee, O King, their hundred arms they wave,
 "Revenge on thee, in hoarser murmurs breathe;
 "Vocal no more since Cambria's fatal day,
 "To high-born Hoel's harp, or soft Llewellyn's lay."

It is superfluous to multiply specimens. The majestic sublimity, and exquisite imagery displayed in the two sister odes (as our critic calls them) claim that encomium in reality, which he bestowed upon them ironically—They are "*a wonderful effort of the mind.*"

The strictures on "*the azure flowers that blow*," is hypercritical in the highest degree. A taste not rendered fastidious by endless refinements, would never have objected to this elegant addition, which renders the line more beautifully poetical. The expression is neither feeble nor tautological; Gray was too much a master of language, too much accustomed to versification, to have used it, merely on account of the rhyme.

We will not presume to cavil with a Cambrian writer* on the propriety with which Gray has applied the runic imagery: but to the praise of universal magnificence, of sublimity without depression, of a beautiful selection of appropriate language, and

* Mr. Owen; Pref. to the Odes of Llywarchen.

of pure classical correctness, he is justly entitled ; nor is there a poet except Shakspeare, who so often creates the ideal presence.

Another excellence observable in Gray, is his judicious use of Alliteration.* John-

* Gray probably borrowed this from the consonance of sounds which was considered as the necessary ornament of a regular verse, by the ancient *Scalds*. The greater this uniformity was, the more the verse approached to perfection ; it likewise served them as a guide in singing their verses ; Giraldus Cambrensis is quoted by Boxhorn, to prove that it was also customary among the ancient Cambrians, and in England. " An agreement of the initial letters was also usual in the poetry of the Finlanders ; and there is something like it in Virgil "*tales casus Cassandra canebat*." Sir I. Bank's letters on Iceland, 211, 212. The prevalence of this custom in Wales, as borrowed from the *Scalds*, and a passage in Rowland's *Mona antiqua* p. 111, 112, lead to conclusions which may justify Gray from the charge of Mr. Owen.

son snarls at this art, as detracting from sublimity ; but our poet has applied it in such a manner, that it adds to, rather than lessens the force of the idea. Alliteration is skilfully used when it fixes the attention on a striking thought or epithet.

“ Ruin cease thee, ruthless King.”

Here the emphasis and the alliteration fall together, and point out the cause and the occasion of it ; and many more such instances might be produced.

A trait of the genius of Lucan may be observed in Gray. In times when the chief posts of excellence are filled, they who wish to excel, are naturally tempted to soar with bolder wings, for they deem that they can only hope to equal, but not surpass classical purity. Perhaps the attempt is more necessary in an age when

literary appetite is infected with empiricism. It is however to be remembered, that the genius of Lucan, like that of Gray, is always elevated to the spirit of Poetry, and notwithstanding the "*double double, toil and trouble,*" the ideas of our bard are exquisitely beautiful, though of subordinate degrees of merit. The various lights and shades are so admirably attempered, such harmonious proportions are observed, and the whole so disposed with regard to effect, that the intrinsic brilliancy of the materials always appears, but chastened by a classical judgment, which has clothed in a garb of decorous elegance the bold and showy beauty of his muse, and corrected by a virgin reserve, her meretricious coquetry.

The genius of Gray has been assimilated to that of Milton;* but if Gray had a

* Wharton's observ. on Milton.

clearer conception of ideal perfection, yet a sense of feeling and impression accompanies the sublime of Milton, which arrests the sympathy of the reader more strongly than the artificiality of Gray; and though they resemble each other in many points, particularly in the felicity of allegoric personification, yet there are traces of a mighty gigantic strength, of an Herculean muscular vigor, in the poetry of the illustrious puritan, which is not to be discerned in the more Apolline features of the sublime of his counterpart. Gray seems to have preferred the graceful glory of his own Hyperion, to the sweeter majesty of imperial Jove; but to the inferior qualities of consistency and correctness, Gray is much more eminently entitled; nor is it the malignant cavil of a Zoilus, a Rymer, or a Voltaire, to notice the obvious absurdity

of making our general ancestors discourse of good and evil, before they had eaten of the tree of knowledge.

In the mechanism of Poetry, Gray attained the acmè of perfection. His elegance is never attended with want of strength: his novelty is never marked by sophistication, and excess of imagery: he never declines, in his poetical sentiments, into ratiocination, and mere good sense. In his union of abstracted qualities with sensible objects, in the lightning of his beak, and terror of his eye, he condenses the grand and sublime. In the structure of his verse, he steers in a most happy medium, between the frigid didactic, and the flowery descriptive; between the dull and the gaudy. He enfeebles nothing by superfluity, never attenuates by poverty, nor obscures by imbecility of conception.

In his fulness he is not redundant, nor is his easiness lost in precision. In the harmony of numbers he is only exceeded by Collins.

Gray wrote but little, but in every thing he was a master. The sublime of his Ode, and the pathos of his Elegy, is universally felt and acknowledged. All his works exhibit strong proofs of a mind cultivated to its utmost extent. His classical allusions are peculiarly just and happy.

The celebrated Elegy in a Country Church-Yard, is praised even by Johnson. The universal voice had already pronounced its eulogium; and the courage of this tremendous critic was not hardy enough to oppose the torrent of general impression. As a specimen of natural plaintive poetry, our language has never produced its equal; and it may be questioned, whether the

best production of any future Poet in the pensive way, will not be that which bears the nearest resemblance to this charming Elegy.

Let us, then, acknowledge the force of unbiaſſed truth, and of natural feeling, and reject the dictatorial arrogance of a Critic, who, however conspicuous for the native vigor of his understanding, has never been celebrated for the candor of his remarks, when the objects of them happened to claſh with his political, or religious prejudices.

but produced of any thing but a
positive view will not be that which bears
the name of religion to this country.

Let us then, we would say, be true to
unbiased truth, and do not let us be
tricked the dishonest language of a Catholic
who, however dangerous for the nation
we are of his religion, is not to be
celebrated for the error of his tongue.
When the objects of their hatred to
class with his political or religious
indignities.

THE
HISTORY
OF
GIBBON.

THE celebrated Historian of the Roman Empire, in the extent of his learning, in the energy of his expression, and in the richness of his imagery, yields not the palm of excellence to any writer which this country has produced. If we review the smooth majestic structure of his language, his acute penetration into, and masterly delineation of character, if we attend to the elegance, to the dignified

sublimity of his luminous page, we cannot hesitate to assign him a place in the first class of historical writers, ancient or modern. In philosophical penetration, Gibbon yields not to Tacitus; in uniformity of narration he is superior to Livy.

It has been observed that many blemishes obscure the splendor of this eminent composition. It has been asserted that both precision and perspicuity are frequently sacrificed to the circumlocution of an elegant diction, by no means free from affectation; that the artificial construction of his style is too apparent, and that he is frequently obscure, verbose, and incorrect.

But perhaps he may stand acquitted of the greater part of these charges, when it is considered that the subject of his work was of a peculiar kind; that it comprehended the history of the declension of a

mighty empire, which had extended its dominion over the greatest part of the known world. As it was his office to describe the various revolutions which accelerated its downfall, his language ought necessarily to imitate the grandeur of the subject, in the loftiness of its construction. Something of simplicity, therefore, must necessarily be sacrificed to artificial combinations, and more of perspicuity to the variety of elegant circumlocution. Elevation of sentiment cannot always,—can seldom be expressed in familiar language.

The nature of Gibbon's subject was not sufficiently considered, when the epithets "*pompous and forced*," were applied to his style; every subject has its appropriate language, and to deviate from it, is in some degree to deviate from excellence.

The colloquial idiom of Addison was exactly suited to the familiar nature of the periodical essay, but it is certainly too feeble to support the dignity of history; we regard it as a beautiful specimen of easy elegance.

The vehement ardor which is so frequently displayed in the "*History of the decline and fall of the Roman empire*," is so natural to the subject, that it transports the reader to the scene of action, and tunes his feelings into a perfect unison with those of the narrator; numberless instances of this kind might be produced; but to extract specimens of animated description from the extensive number of pages which compose six large quartos, would be endless labor! Amidst such a profusion of excellencies, we should hesitate in our choice.

Whatever the prejudices of captious

criticism may have alledged against the *Historian of the Roman empire*, Posterity, that impartial and decisive judge of literary merit, will assign him a distinguished niche in the temple of fame erected to British Historians. Taste and judgment hesitates in the preference, whether of the vehement ardor, the luxuriant sublimity, the forcible elegance of GIBBON, the polished urbanity of ROBERTSON, or the acute and elegant sententiousness of HUME.

No one can presume to defend the indelicacies which are interspersed in the *Decline and Fall*. We blush for Mr. Gibbon when he defiles his page with such immoralities; notwithstanding they are generally obscured by the veil of a learned language. The apparent preference given to the religion of the oriental impostor to

that of the divine Jesus may excite indignation, but not astonishment; when we reflect that the present age has produced an author,* who has attempted to restore paganism, in what he terms its original sublimity and splendor.

It has been justly remarked, "that the
 " literary imperfections which are discerned
 " in the history of the decline and fall of
 " the Roman Empire, but faintly disfigure
 " a work at which (though Philosophers
 " have approved, and Europe admired it,)
 " Collegians have sneered, and Critics
 " sharled; but which the serious Christian
 " alone is justly entitled to treat with
 " indignation."

Mr. Taylor.

(11)

THE
RESTRICTIVE FORCE
OF
RELIGION.

RELIGION is the strongest barrier against the insinuating attacks of vice. The love of power will burst the bonds of virtue, and the ties of morality are too feeble to restrain avarice from trampling down the fences of honesty, in the pursuit of the golden fruit which attracts its wretched desires. If Piety has no restrictive force, the passions will seize the reins, and their effects, both on the community,

and their unfortunate possessor, will be dreadful in the extreme. Self-gratification is so powerful an incentive to crime, that nothing but a sincere belief of an omniscient providence, the final rewarder of virtue, and the certain punisher of vice, can curb the turbulent passions of man.

Human laws being founded on general principles, and pointed but to few of those actions which Religion and Morality justly denominate crimes, can never operate as strong or sufficient checks upon vice. Cunning will elude all the vigilance of the statutes: for the situations which may concur to enable one man to defraud another are so numerous, and of such various complexions, that in defiance of the multiplicity and severity of our penal laws, Knavery becomes a *safe* occupation.

But the wretch who violates the laws of

his country with impunity, who triumphs in his villainies, and smiles horrible over the desolating effects of his profligacies, must tremble, when he considers that the all-searching eye of the divinity penetrates to the very bottom of his soul; that his most secret thoughts are known to that God, who will assuredly deal with every one according to the purity of his intentions.

The force of the restraining bonds of Religion, was perhaps never weaker than at the present period. The manners of the fashionable world communicate a tincture to those of the middle and lower orders of society. Luxury, dissipation, and a thoughtless gaiety, reign over the great with an absolute and undivided sway. The duties of Religion, and even the *appearances* of Piety are not reluctantly

sacrificed at the shrine of licentious fashion, voluptuous indulgence, and disgusting frivolity. Sensual gratifications are hostile to the growth of morality; and neither the dictates of Reason, nor the precepts of Religion, can combat with success the habits of man, sanctioned as they are by the practice of the rich, the great, and the gay,

THE
FRENCH REPUBLIC.

WE do not pay a sufficient attention to the history of the human heart, when we defend the principles on which the French Republic is built. The people of that wretched country are plunged in a sea of abstract and speculative axioms of government,* few of which are adapted to the real

* Mr. Burke has admirably characterized the French Reformers in his letter to Lord Lauderdale, where he has minutely described the philosophical

character of man. To accommodate an exact purity of system to the nature of human kind; avarice, ambition, revenge, pride, and the love of fame, must be forever eradicated from the heart. They are gazing with an eager eye at the ideal fabric of a virtuous republic, without bestowing a glance at the vicious materials which must necessarily compose it. The members of this new state should be newly educated. The impressions made by the indulgence of the passions are too deeply implanted for the axioms of Philosophy to remove.

mind, formed upon principles of metaphysical refinement. He aptly calls it "*pure defecated depblegmated evil*;" where the dearest interests of mankind are to be sacrificed, to reduce a theory to the test of experiment.

Whoever will consult the Grecian history, particularly that of Athens, must be convinced that confusion will generally be produced by democracy. The consular state of Rome was conspicuous for exhibiting a contest for power between the different demagogues of the people. If we survey with an eye of impartiality, the degree of public felicity likely to be produced by a "*new form*" of government, perhaps we might discern that even the despotism of absolute monarchy is better adapted to satisfy the various claims of human nature, than the specious liberty of an ill-fashioned republic.

The declamations of the late national assembly, and the present national convention of France, are calculated solely to inflame the passions of the multitude. Their arguments are full of antithesis and

point. The sentiments are often sublime, and the language has frequently received a very high polish. If this senate-house was a school for the cultivation of taste, and the improvement of composition, it must elaim an unqualified admiration; but when we observe the crude and enthusiastic ideas of its members, framed into laws, we perceive the absurdity, and tremble at the consequence. The paradoxes of abstract philosophy, can never be adapted to the real wants of mankind.

AVARICE.

AVARICE is certainly the most despicable passion of the human mind; it possesses no rational inducement, and is decorated with no attractions. Luxury and sensuality may be associated with integrity and honor; the excesses of the voluptuary may find an apology in the seducing allurements of fashion, and sensibility itself may accompany the commission of some particular errors; but the avaricious wretch can behold without emotion or concern, the gloomy pri-

son into which the knavery of his callous heart has thrown his dearest friend.

Avarice takes a deeper and firmer root in the human bosom than any other passion; it gains fresh power every hour: nothing gives it even a temporary check, but the fear of shame. The miser who starves himself to feed the insatiable hunger of his voracious coffers; who perceives without a pang, or a blush, his wife and his children made miserable by his covetousness; shall sometimes appear generous, to escape the sneers of contempt.

The man of feeling is seldom tinged with this meanest of all passions; for where Avarice resides, the nobler sensibilities must depart. The sordid wretch feels not for himself; he can pass through life, unaffected by the ardor of Love, the generous pride of Honor, or the benevolence of

Esteem. The ingratitude of friends, the perfidy of a mistress, or the misery of his fellow-creatures, are little noticed by him in whose heart the love of money has taken root.

Avarice may sometimes be accompanied with learning, knowledge, and genius; but a mind of sensibility *never* attends it. The punishment which this sordid passion brings with it will never operate as a warning. How often do we perceive health, ease, and even life itself, sacrificed to the immoderate pursuit of wealth, a pursuit which is persisted in with more eagerness as life draws nearer to its close;—a most unaccountable phrenzy—a proof of absolute lunacy. Why should industry be anxious to increase its stores, when the glass of existence is nearly run out, when the limbs are feeble and contracted, when

the hands tremble, and the eyes grow dim?

In the vehement struggle for conquest over the heart, between the two rival passions, Avarice and Ambition, Avarice generally remains the victor. Ambition, from the nature of the theatre of its action, must have its bounds, beyond which lunacy alone would attempt to leap; but Avarice has none. The decay of mind and body may render painful the eminencies of station; the love of fame may be almost extinguished; but the mind in which Avarice is predominant, broods over its darling treasure with a watchful solicitude, to the last moment of life.

OBSTRUCTIONS
TO THE
PERFECTION OF VIRTUE.

THE perfection of virtue cannot be arrived at by a creature so organized as man ; so subject to the controuling tyranny of custom, and possessed of appetites which required the absolute sacrifice of honor to their gratification. Modern luxury, by creating a great number of artificial wants, has weakened the cause of virtue ; for where a comparative poverty becomes contemptible, virtue cannot conquer the fear of shame.

If the causes of the decline of honor, honesty, and true patriotism, were to be enquired into, perhaps it would appear, that the increase of commerce and manufactories, has given these obsolete, feeble, and worn-out qualities their mortal stab. By creating an increase of wealth, it has raised the price of provisions, and thus oppressed the poor; by creating a competition in splendid luxury, it has banished that small portion of virtue which once belonged to the rich.

The benefits of traffic seem to have been greatly exaggerated. The authors who have treated on the subject of commerce, are chiefly those who have been enriched, directly or indirectly, by its consequences.

Commerce is the favorite of the day. National prejudice operates strongly in its

favour. It is difficult to stem a torrent which rolls so rapidly; perhaps it is impossible to divert it into another channel.



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LUXURY.

THE rapid increase of luxury, and the consequent introduction of polished and social manners, have been censured as one cause of that effeminacy so conspicuous in the British nation. It has been suggested, that the martial spirit, and the virtuous independence of former ages, cannot exist under so enervating a system: but may not the politeness of manners, the liberal spirit, the delicacy of sentiment, which may in a great measure be attributed to the increase

of luxury ? will not the softness of manners which diminishes personal bravery, at the same time lessen the occasions for its exertions ? will it not melt down and subdue the ferocity of the passions, and the lust of dominion, those general causes of war ?

If Luxury produces such effects as these, we must pardon the increase of cunning, the rapacity of avarice, and the sensuality of voluptuousness, which it has certainly introduced. Perhaps nature is so framed, that no evil can enter its constitution, without carrying with it some portion of good ; and it may be equally true, that the most wholesome laws, or the most decorous customs, must inevitably operate as disadvantages to some part of the community.

THE
MORAL INFLUENCE
OF
TASTE.

IT has been a question, whether a taste for the fine arts, and the beauties of nature, have an influence favorable to morals. Lord Shaftsbury, Locke, Montesquieu, and the judicious, philosophical Hume, contend for the affirmative of the proposition; the reverse of it has been supported by some modern essayists. Perhaps the effect of taste on human conduct is very small. I would not contend that a love of the Belles Lettres, or of rural orna-

ment *necessarily* render a man virtuous. Yet I am inclined to think that a man of science is generally an honest man. The errors which are often found in the conduct of the learned, deserve not the harsh appellation of crimes.

I would by no means affirm that probity is the natural and certain effect of taste or genius. The seclusion which is often the lot of the student, prevents an exposure to those numerous temptations so fatal to virtue, with which the world abounds; but let it be remembered, that though absolute knavery be seldom attached to the literary character, yet the same phrenzy of soul which may be necessary to constitute the painter, the orator, or the poet, will frequently become the parent of extravagances, to which the just principles of morality, and the pure precepts of religion have affixed the name of *Vices*.

CHRISTIANITY

NO

IMPOSTURE.

THE arguments which tend to confirm the divine origin of the christian religion, as a truth of momentous import, have a better prospect of general diffusion, from appeals to its internal, rather than external evidence. While the object of the former is rationally to persuade, of the latter demonstrably to convince; it may be doubted whether the sometimes inexplicable opinion of truth, produced by the one, is not

equally powerful with the direct testimony of the other. An examination of a system formed near two thousand years since by its external evidence, is a weapon which few are able to wield ; and the warfare, if successful, is rather rewarded with the loud applause of admiration, than the silent approbation of general currency ; all admire, but few read the laborious researches of a KENNICOT, for such labors are frequently considered as merely professional. We cannot be amused with scientific works, however beneficial in themselves, or their objects, the merits of which require similar science to ascertain. Such discussions but partially interest the great majority of mankind ; we are content with the admission of the contested truth ; and relinquish without reluctance the discussion of minute deductions, and

the fatigue of verbal criticism. We turn with equal indifference from learned disquisitions on the prophecies and the "*History of early opinions.*"*

The internal evidence of the Gospel, attested by arguments drawn from the moral phenomena of the mind, is susceptible of demonstration, in a general, and more agreeable way, *by a simple review of the personal character of Christ, and the mode of conduct which he pursued.* These incontestibly vouch the authenticity of his pretensions. The end of imposture is self-gratification; and the fruits expected to be gathered from it, are the luxuries attendant

* That profound theology which pretends to lift up its countenance so high, rather serves to perplex, than enlighten the minds of men; and to disfigure, rather than adorn, the genuine beauty of the Gospel.

Dissertation on Heretical Opinions; by J. Rawlins.

upon wealth, or the eminent stations of ambition. The history of the world presents us with no character which has entangled itself in the deceitful mazes of falsehood, without apparent motive. Virtue has been counterfeited as the road to wealth, and fervent devotion has been affected as the footstool to a throne. Charity, benevolence, and every amiable quality has been assumed, when the assumption was esteemed propitious to fortune or to fame.*

The conduct of the divine founder of our religion stands, a single, solitary instance of an opposite disposition; he sought not wealth, and eminence he despised.

* The profession of Benevolence is reconcileable with a bad, and a hard heart.

Knox's Essay on the Life and Writings of Sterne.

The esteem, the hatred of the world, its honors, advantages, and taunting indignities, were things equally indifferent to him. Human passions were dead in that bosom which was alive only to the feelings of divine love. His principles were calculated for the promotion of genuine virtue, and its consequent pure felicity; at once simple and disinterested, they were adapted to every station, and pointed to every duty of life. His system of morals was essentially different from any production of human wisdom; it was the will of the supreme being, sanctioned by the prospect of infinite rewards, and enforced by the dread of eternal punishments.

The doctrines which Jesus disseminated, and the duties which he enjoined his followers to fulfil, were not adapted to the general pursuits of active life; on the con-

trary, they strongly opposed every passion natural to the human heart. Ambition derived no support from the doctrines of a religion, whose kingdom was not of this world; and pride received no encouragement from a system, whose distinguishing characteristic was humility.*

Neither were its strong recommendations to the practice of universal benevolence, likely to be regarded by a people, in whose character avarice was a prominent feature; whose national prejudices were inveterately obstinate, and whose charity was wholly limited.‡ The thirst for empire, and the

* The Heathens rejected Humility from the catalogue of Virtues.

‡ The character of the Jews, as described by TACITUS, was, "ready charity to each other, but hostile hatred to other nations."

glory of heroic atchievements, are passions which naturally cleave to the heart of man. Peace and good-will towards human kind cannot exist in that bosom in which the passion for military fame has taken root. The harmony of universal love accords but ill with the dissonant tones of rapine and revenge.

This great and distinguishing difference between the precepts of Christ, and those of every other lawgiver, sufficiently refutes the charge of imposture. By flattering no human propensities, they merited not the returns of human gratitude ; and he could expect no assistance from others, in the pursuit of wealth, eminence, or fame, whose principal aim was to eradicate avarice, ambition, and pride from the heart. Human attainments were not the objects of the religion of Jesus,—No, all the ve-

hemence of his oratory, all the ardor of his love, and all the beautiful consistency of his life, were directed to the pursuit and fruition of that heavenly felicity, in comparison of which, earthly pre-eminence, and earthly enjoyments, are as "the drop in the bucket, or the dust of the balance."*

Nor could Jesus have been influenced by that passion for glory, which experience tells us will transport the mind of man to the utmost heights of extravagance; had he wished to obtain it among the Jews, he must have trod in the paths of pharisaick hypocrisy; had he turned towards the Gentiles, he must have modelled his personal conduct into the systematic affectation which characterized their philosophers. The doctrine of the MESSIAS was not

* Isaiah, c. xl. v. 15.

adapted to the deep-rooted prejudice of the Jews, nor to the stoical apathy of the Gentiles; to the former it was a stumbling block, and to the latter it was foolishness.

Imposture, as applied to the character of Christ, was impossible; unless we suppose (by the operation of a more stupendous miracle than ever was recorded) the whole system of moral conduct annihilated at once; appointed as he was to preach the deficiency of unassisted humanity, for the attainment of immortal happiness, his conduct must have been of that colour, which could not mingle with the common œconomy of life; by asserting the vanity of terrestrial enjoyments, his doctrines lifted the soul in sublime aspirations towards a blissful eternity; and this divine energy of character was never impeded by the inactivity of indolence, or the reluctance

of fatigue. Review the conduct of JESUS, from the first dawnings of that light which illuminated his ministry, to that beatific æra, when the sun of his benevolence set with such astonishing splendor, in that sacrifice of blood, which he offered up for all the sins of all mankind. Survey the warmth of his love, in the anxiety which he expressed for the salvation of his people; examine the purity of his precepts, and the amiable complexion of his morality; behold his self-denial, his modesty, his forgiveness of injuries, and his absolute command of temper, and we affirm that Christ could not be a man only, but a God.

And if the character of Jesus, by the divine excellence of the parts which compose it, rises superior to the suspicion of deceit, that of his disciples furnishes a more humble, though hardly less decisive

proof of the heavenly origin of the gospel. They unreservedly declared that they had communications of the divine spirit ; they courageously persisted in the promotion of their master's work, against the mighty torrent of worldly opposition. Could any thing less than the true spirit of God enable them to suffer ignominy, persecution, and death, without a blush or a groan ; while at the same time they despised temporal advantages, and courted not worldly distinctions. If other motives than those of a divine origin could produce such conduct, we must begin on new principles, our researches into the human heart.

The belief of an omniscient providence, was universally received by the Jews ; a providence whose scrutinizing eye was constantly directed to the most secret thoughts of man, Under this solemn idea

of divine inspection, the disciples would not have dared to lay claim to an inspiration they had never received; they would have trembled at the fear of an everlasting punishment, when they invoked the Almighty governor of the universe to confirm the truth of their ministry, by the testimony of miracles. They would, uninspired by divine revelation, have shrunk from the horrors of the agonizing cross.

Neither will a charge of enthusiasm contribute to support that of imposture against the first preachers of christianity. Enthusiasm is the offspring of a heated imagination, and the parent of a wild extravagance of thought and action; it pursues with unremitting energy, the propagation of its wild and singular ideas. It is the tendency of this luxuriant branch of mental faculty, to strain exertion, to warp

understanding, to engross imagination, to narrow benevolence, and to engender the opposite vice. It is always attended by passionate exaggeration, and blinded by overpowering sensation ; it more frequently declaims than argues : but we behold the disciples, and the apostles, all preaching the same doctrines, all practising the same divine morality, without invading the temperance of reason, the freedom of speculation, the coolness of argument, the universality of charity, or the simplicity of nature.

That the power conferred on them was extraordinary, and the light that guided them was an emanation of the divine radiance, is proved by their evident superiority, when they preached the animating truths of the gospel, contrasted with their

ideas on ordinary subjects ;* here the natural poverty of their uninstructed minds is clearly to be discerned. They frequently cleaved to absurd national prejudices, and enveloped some of the fairest features of Christianity with the sable veil of Judaic Ceremony. But their moral conduct was calculated to give weight to their ministry. The characters of the apostles were stamped with the image of the Deity. They were patterns of disinterested benevolence.†

* Upon this principle of supposing that inspiration extended no farther than its object, we may account for the physical errors in the old testament, without having recourse to HUTCHINSONIAN discussions.

† For some masterly, close, and logical arguments, on the supposed motives which might influence the conduct of the Apostles, Vide "Prolegomena to Whitby's Paraphrase."

And if the personal character of Christ, and that of his Apostles, furnish the strongest moral proof of the divinity of their mission, a review of the nature of man in his predominant characteristic of ferocity, will exhibit a farther evidence of the heavenly origin of the Gospel. This review will convince us, that the perverse and wicked nature of the human race, prevents the practice of those benevolent virtues which would render it acceptable to the divine being. It was necessary, therefore, that there should be a revelation, whose doctrines should stand in direct opposition to the vicious passions of man, which should allure him to the practice of virtue, by the promises of a blissful eternity, and deter him from the pursuit of vice, by the fear of an everlasting punishment. The christian scheme was alone capable of reconci-

ling the justice of an offended being, with mercy towards his rebellious creatures. Sincere repentance alone being required of man, as the condition of pardon for those multiplied offences, of which the propensities of his nature, made it impossible he should avoid the commission.

If we survey man in every stage of his existence, from the rudest state of savage brutality, to the most eminent stations of polished society; from the earliest days of prattling infancy, to the moment when the grave is about for ever to close over him, we shall find in every situation, the most deplorable proofs of his natural depravity. In that early stage of his political being which is usually termed a state of nature, we see this predominant characteristic of ferocity in a more striking point of view. The savage, as a warrior, is

distinguished by a stern and sullen grandeur, a jealous and haughty pride, a vindictive and relentless spirit, a subtil and wakeful cunning, a keen and eager solicitude attend him in the chase; these may be in some measure necessary passions to enable him to provide for animal wants; but observe the degraded state of his mind; there we behold a superstitious idolatry, an incapacity of abstraction, a malignant cruelty, conceited craft, and knavish dishonesty. Brutal intemperance, and torpid indolence, succeed to a momentary spirit of heroic exertion. If we subtract the effusions of the short-lived admiration we are sometimes constrained to feel at the courage he displays, and at the fortitude he exhibits, we must detest the ruminating savage, as a being uniformly selfish, malignant, and ferocious.

The unreserved openness, and engaging innocence of childhood, is too often alloyed by an unamiable mixture of wanton cruelty.* Are we to look for the cause in a restless activity of intellect, uninfluenced by moral restrictions, and capable only of being amused by sensible occupations? To discuss a question so difficult of solution, would be to interfere with the abstruse labor of discriminating habits and instincts. In the situation of the savage, where the interests of life are not protected by the shield of civil regulations, where the means of sustenance are precarious, we easily discover the source of his ferocity,—a ferocity which cannot be overcome, unless he is previ-

* Doctor Beddoes, with that peculiar penetration which distinguishes every page of his equally philosophical, and humane productions, recommends natural history, to prevent this cruelty in children,

ously instructed in the arts of domestic convenience, and the nature and duties of social union.*

A ferocity equally violent, marks under certain circumstances, the character of man, in a state of exalted refinement. There may be a period (if that period be not already arrived) when a general diffusion of knowledge will spiritualize the mind, when the luxuries multiplied by commerce, and the influence of the elegant arts, will cheapen the delights of sense; when the united power of these causes will, in the

* Lord Kaimes recommends the instruction of Savages in the arts of civilized life, before they are made Christians; and Dr. White wishes them to be instructed in European Science, at the same time with European Religion. Vide "Sketches of the history of Man," and "White's Sermon on the duty of attempting the propagation of the Gospel in India."

classes removed from want, render the incorporeal enjoyments of eminence and fame, the great objects of happiness: If this passion be general, and its direction political, the opposing pride of rival ambition will not scruple, in the pursuit of its darling idol, to deluge the world with blood.

This ferocity, as interwoven with human passions, may be observed to prevail in every station of life; far from being confined to the bosoms of contending heroes, tyrannical monarchs, or avaricious, overbearing statesmen, it accompanies the humbler conditions of man; and if the cabinets of princes display its history on a more extensive scale, the cottage of the peasant is not exempt from it. A sense of the claims of others will often yield to the promptitude of offending; and the jealousy of self-love, or the consciousness of injury, will not

always await the tardy decisions of adjudication, or equitably apportion the retribution to the wrong. To restrain man from the violence of his fellow creatures, capital punishments have ever formed a part of every system of legislation.*

* The numerous penal statutes which exist in this Kingdom, though they are in some measure the consequence of increased commerce and manufactory, yet at the same time *prove* the natural ferocity and cunning of man, which the strongest reins of law cannot curb, and which frequently eludes with the greatest facility, the closest grasp of its most cautious statutes.

Nor will the enactors of severe laws escape the charge of inhumanity. The same spirit dictated the criminal code, which is displayed in its violation. The self-defensive policy of man has exhibited itself in the most unfavorable point of view, where it rigidly guards by the terrors of death, a trifling part of property. Penal laws have been too often the work of a few, influenced by improper passions.

Vide Mr. Turner's paper on Crimes and Punishments, in the Manchester Memoirs. Vol. 2, p. 293.

Philosophy, which consists in a *habit of reflection*, partly dictated by nature, and partly acquired by art, is insufficient to check the malignant passions. Its genuine object is to steel the soul against the attacks of fortune, to subdue the turbulent passions, and to give the powers of reason a cool and unbiaſſed operation. The active duties (if this definition be admitted) come not within its ſcope, and Philosophy may regulate the mind, where the practice of virtue does not form the character. Under the mask of this alluring aſſumption, all the ſtriking characteristics of Philosophy, its apathy, ſelf-conqueſt, and coolneſs, are reconcileable with the cruelty of ambition, the extortion of avarice, the villainy of rapine, and the malice of revenge. The deceptions of ſelf-love may gloſs over the impulses of vice, and that enormity of

varied crime, that desolating, destructive ferocity, which history has never paralleled, that system of bloody policy, which stains the early annals of the Republic of France, may again find, as it has already found, a palliation in the cant of Philosophy and Patriotism.

To banish this inherent ferocity from the human heart, and to substitute in its stead the amiable virtue of benevolence, is the peculiar object, and where it has taken firm root, the successful effect of the christian religion. By inculcating a mild and pacific demeanour and doctrine, which detracts not from courage, where lawfully exercised, nor from fortitude, when virtuously exhibited; it bounds insolence and spirit within the restrictive sphere of a general love of our "neighbour as ourselves." We are taught to subdue the

angry passions, at the moment they are kindled, by the exquisite similitude of that generous spirit of forgiveness, which follows the transient resentment of children.*

To heal those wounds which from the tenacious memory of self-love, are too apt to rankle in the heart, our holy religion teaches us to resign our wrongs into the hands of that being, the mysteries of whose providence we cannot penetrate, and whose final justice we contemplate with trembling awe; and to confirm us in the practice of the great virtues of meekness, resignation, and pardon, we are taught, that upon the equitable principle of reciprocal retribution, "it will be meted unto us, as we have meted unto others."

* Be not children in understanding, but in maliciousness.

St. Paul.

Such are the amiable characteristics of the religion of Jesus, a religion, which as it regards our present or future felicity, leaves at an immense distance the imperfect institutions of man. In every human code of worship, the passions of its framers are apparent. The idolatrous ignorance of the pagans scrupled not to attribute the grossest of earthly vices to that imaginary being whom it had invested with the heavenly thunder; that by the practices of their Deity, their own profligacies might be countenanced. The impostor of the east affirmed that the doctrines of the revelation which he pretended to have received, were to be propagated by the sword; impiously superadding the supposed authority of Heaven, to the desolating disposition of man. We hesitate not to affirm, that every other Religion, except that of Christ,

betrays strong marks in its features, of human depravity: but divested as this is, of every earthly characteristic, the fact amongst numberless others, furnishes a strong proof of the impossibility of its being an imposture.

FREDERIC III.

OF

PRUSSIA.

THE character of the late King of Prussia has been supposed to resemble that of Philip of Macedon: this may be true as it respects its grand outline, and some of its most remarkable features; but if I were compelled to draw a more finished and perfect likeness, I would compare him to Cæsar; the same martial spirit, the same ambition, undaunted resolution, and heroic fortitude, the same intuitive genius in

difficult situations, strongly mark the similitude. This likeness extends to the nicer shades of the portrait of the mind. Both had the same taste for literature, both were soldiers and students, both were authors, and wrote the history of their victories.

THE
RAMBLER

OF
JOHNSON.

THE Rambler ranks superior, as a periodical paper, to any other which this country has produced. If we except the peculiar and exquisite humour admirably displayed, and uniformly supported by Addison, in the portrait of *Sir Roger*, he cannot be placed in competition with Johnson. His acute penetration into the human mind, his intimate acquaintance with the whole circle of ethics, his keen research into general motive and principle, has never

been equalled by any writer in the world : amidst such a variety of excellencies, we hesitate on which to bestow our chief admiration ; it remains suspended between the strength of his understanding, and the dignified construction of his language. He moves with a solemn majesty, which beguiles languor into attention, and deprives apathy of its coldness. Strongly illuminated by the flame of a pure morality, his strokes are powerful. They are directed by the hand of wisdom, and they blaze with the irradiations of truth.

MY UNCLE TOBY.

“MY UNCLE TOBY” is perhaps the best character that ever was drawn. Sterne by confining himself to the simple delineation of Nature, has established a fame which will continue forever. The grave irony of Cervantes, being directed against the foible of a particular æra, must sink into neglect, as the object of its satire becomes more remote, and less understood; but *Tristram Shandy* must always continue a favorite book, as long as passions and eccentricities exist in the heart and conduct.

MY FAVORITE BOOK
is a book which has been
written by a man who has
been a student of the
history of the world for
many years. It is a book
which will contain a
great deal of information
about the history of the
world. It is a book which
will be of great value to
anyone who is interested
in the history of the world.
It is a book which will
be of great value to any
one who is interested in
the history of the world.

RAPE OF THE LOCK.

THE *Rape of the Lock* still keeps its place as the most finished poem in our language. Its two rivals, "The triumphs of temper," and "The loves of the plants," must yield the palm of excellence, as a finished whole. Mr. Hayley, by spreading his colors on too wide a canvass, has weakened their effect; and Dr. Darwin, whose skill in poetical embellishment is superior to that of his rival, has exhibited no proof of invention, feeling, or passion: his per-

formance contains a heap of splendid materials, thrown together without order or proportion ; and his ornaments are so profusely laid on, that a chaste imagination would pronounce them *meretricious*.

Mr. Cambridge's *Scribleriad* is formed on a purer model of the mock heroic, than either of the poems we have noticed, and it is executed every where with equal genius and judgment. The reason why this exquisitely finished piece is not so generally known as the poems of Pope, or Hayley, proceeds from its being adapted only to the studious. A performance which does not contain frequent allusions to the popular topics, and to the reigning fashions of the day, or does not detail the history of the passions, has no prospect of becoming a favorite with the public.

DETRACTION.

DETRACTION is perhaps the only vice which proposes no other end, than the gratification of a malignant disposition; in every other crime, the gain of the guilty bears some proportion to the loss of the innocent. Can Philosophers inform us why a vice which tears asunder every tie of friendship and love, that snatches the wife from her husband's bosom, and the child from the embrace of its parent, and which mortally wounds the dearest

interests of society, should be so often practised without apparent motive? The darts of detraction are as invisible as they are deadly. The ferocity of a hero who makes an open attack, may find some apology in the gallantry of his conduct; but cowardice has never found an advocate.

The frequency of the practice of evil-speaking, proves the existence of a passion in the human bosom, equally strong, and detestable, with the love of gold; and we may remark, that it has increased, since facility of intercourse has rendered the propagation of scandal easy. The multiplication of newspapers has opened ready means for the display of this admirable talent. The furnishers of anecdotes and paragraphs, ravage with pitiless remorse, the sacred arcana of private characters;

and the publications of the most extensive sale, are those which are most copiously filled with the deadly poison, which destroys the peace of blameless individuals, merely to furnish matter for the empty stare of the blockhead, or the vacant laugh of the coxcomb.

What a weak hold has benevolence on the heart of man ! The eagerness visibly displayed in the divulging stories which depreciate our neighbours, proves the difficulty of suppression to be almost insuperable.

[illegible]

of the same kind as the one which was sold to the
17th of a week sold for \$100.00 and the same
one of the same kind as the one which was sold to the

the following is a list of the names of the persons who have been appointed to the various positions in the various departments of the Government of the State of New York, for the year 1900.

1110-1119-1120-1121-1122-1123-1124-1125-1126-1127-1128-1129-1130-1131-1132-1133-1134-1135-1136-1137-1138-1139-1140-1141-1142-1143-1144-1145-1146-1147-1148-1149-1150-1151-1152-1153-1154-1155-1156-1157-1158-1159-1160-1161-1162-1163-1164-1165-1166-1167-1168-1169-1170-1171-1172-1173-1174-1175-1176-1177-1178-1179-1180-1181-1182-1183-1184-1185-1186-1187-1188-1189-1190-1191-1192-1193-1194-1195-1196-1197-1198-1199-1200-1201-1202-1203-1204-1205-1206-1207-1208-1209-1210-1211-1212-1213-1214-1215-1216-1217-1218-1219-1220-1221-1222-1223-1224-1225-1226-1227-1228-1229-1230-1231-1232-1233-1234-1235-1236-1237-1238-1239-1240-1241-1242-1243-1244-1245-1246-1247-1248-1249-1250-1251-1252-1253-1254-1255-1256-1257-1258-1259-1260-1261-1262-1263-1264-1265-1266-1267-1268-1269-1270-1271-1272-1273-1274-1275-1276-1277-1278-1279-1280-1281-1282-1283-1284-1285-1286-1287-1288-1289-1290-1291-1292-1293-1294-1295-1296-1297-1298-1299-1300-1301-1302-1303-1304-1305-1306-1307-1308-1309-1310-1311-1312-1313-1314-1315-1316-1317-1318-1319-1320-1321-1322-1323-1324-1325-1326-1327-1328-1329-1330-1331-1332-1333-1334-1335-1336-1337-1338-1339-1340-1341-1342-1343-1344-1345-1346-1347-1348-1349-1350-1351-1352-1353-1354-1355-1356-1357-1358-1359-1360-1361-1362-1363-1364-1365-1366-1367-1368-1369-1370-1371-1372-1373-1374-1375-1376-1377-1378-1379-1380-1381-1382-1383-1384-1385-1386-1387-1388-1389-1390-1391-1392-1393-1394-1395-1396-1397-1398-1399-1400-1401-1402-1403-1404-1405-1406-1407-1408-1409-1410-1411-1412-1413-1414-1415-1416-1417-1418-1419-1420-1421-1422-1423-1424-1425-1426-1427-1428-1429-1430-1431-1432-1433-1434-1435-1436-1437-1438-1439-1440-1441-1442-1443-1444-1445-1446-1447-1448-1449-1450-1451-1452-1453-1454-1455-1456-1457-1458-1459-1460-1461-1462-1463-1464-1465-1466-1467-1468-1469-1470-1471-1472-1473-1474-1475-1476-1477-1478-1479-1480-1481-1482-1483-1484-1485-1486-1487-1488-1489-1490-1491-1492-1493-1494-1495-1496-1497-1498-1499-1500-1501-1502-1503-1504-1505-1506-1507-1508-1509-1510-1511-1512-1513-1514-1515-1516-1517-1518-1519-1520-1521-1522-1523-1524-1525-1526-1527-1528-1529-1530-1531-1532-1533-1534-1535-1536-1537-1538-1539-1540-1541-1542-1543-1544-1545-1546-1547-1548-1549-1550-1551-1552-1553-1554-1555-1556-1557-1558-1559-1560-1561-1562-1563-1564-1565-1566-1567-1568-1569-1570-1571-1572-1573-1574-1575-1576-1577-1578-1579-1580-1581-1582-1583-1584-1585-1586-1587-1588-1589-1590-1591-1592-1593-1594-1595-1596-1597-1598-1599-1600-1601-1602-1603-1604-1605-1606-1607-1608-1609-1610-1611-1612-1613-1614-1615-1616-1617-1618-1619-1620-1621-1622-1623-1624-1625-1626-1627-1628-1629-1630-1631-1632-1633-1634-1635-1636-1637-1638-1639-1640-1641-1642-1643-1644-1645-1646-1647-1648-1649-1650-1651-1652-1653-1654-1655-1656-1657-1658-1659-1660-1661-1662-1663-1664-1665-1666-1667-1668-1669-1670-1671-1672-1673-1674-1675-1676-1677-1678-1679-1680-1681-1682-1683-1684-1685-1686-1687-1688-1689-1690-1691-1692-1693-1694-1695-1696-1697-1698-1699-1700-1701-1702-1703-1704-1705-1706-1707-1708-1709-1710-1711-1712-1713-1714-1715-1716-1717-1718-1719-1720-1721-1722-1723-1724-1725-1726-1727-1728-1729-1730-1731-1732-1733-1734-1735-1736-1737-1738-1739-1740-1741-1742-1743-1744-1745-1746-1747-1748-1749-1750-1751-1752-1753-1754-1755-1756-1757-1758-1759-1760-1761-1762-1763-1764-1765-1766-1767-1768-1769-1770-1771-1772-1773-1774-1775-1776-1777-1778-1779-1780-1781-1782-1783-1784-1785-1786-1787-1788-1789-1790-1791-1792-1793-1794-1795-1796-1797-1798-1799-1800-1801-1802-1803-1804-1805-1806-1807-1808-1809-1810-1811-1812-1813-1814-1815-1816-1817-1818-1819-1820-1821-1822-1823-1824-1825-1826-1827-1828-1829-1830-1831-1832-1833-1834-1835-1836-1837-1838-1839-1840-1841-1842-1843-1844-1845-1846-1847-1848-1849-1850-1851-1852-1853-1854-1855-1856-1857-1858-1859-1860-1861-1862-1863-1864-1865-1866-1867-1868-1869-1870-1871-1872-1873-1874-1875-1876-1877-1878-1879-1880-1881-1882-1883-1884-1885-1886-1887-1888-1889-1890-1891-1892-1893-1894-1895-1896-1897-1898-1899-1900-1901-1902-1903-1904-1905-1906-1907-1908-1909-1910-1911-1912-1913-1914-1915-1916-1917-1918-1919-1920-1921-1922-1923-1924-1925-1926-1927-1928-1929-1930-1931-1932-1933-1934-1935-1936

17

THE SUPERIOR ATTRACTION

OF

AGREEABLE QUALITIES

TO

STEADY VIRTUES.

THE agreeable qualities of the mind are generally more attractive than the steady virtues of the soul. It should seem that the social alliance of the heart, commonly called friendship, ought to be bottomed on the solid foundation of religion and virtue; but a view of human life will convince us, that the easy, cheerful, agreeable companion, is preferred to the determined adherer to steadfast integrity. If the

man of attractive, social qualities, frequently deviates from the line of strict morality, yet his conduct (if not so enormously vicious as to reflect shame upon his friends,) does not often dissolve the mutual tie. Are we sonder of being pleased than instructed? Does the heart shrink from the investigation of truth? But the selfish nature of the human mind will cling to its own trifling gratifications, though the adherence contributes to countenance profligacies, which disgrace the human species. Such is the mind of man, as it appears from a survey of actual existing manners, that however we may attempt to refine it by cultivation, however hypocrisy may throw her cloak over it, and conceal for a time some of its most conspicuous deformities, the task of altering it successfully seems impracticable.

The preacher who declaims on the enormity of human crimes, and points out the dreadful consequence of perseverance in the commission of them ; if he paints in beautiful and glowing colors, the amiable and attractive charms of christianity, will find but little attention paid to his sermons by the bulk of mankind. They push on in the mad career of vice and folly, inattentive to every thing but the pleasures of self-gratification. Vice is too obstinate to be turned from its course by warnings, however awful, and folly is too light and vain to listen to instruction. The preacher and the essayist must be content with the felicity of a self-approving conscience, as the sole reward of their labors.

THE

DIFFICULTY OF FIXING

STANDARD OF TASTE.

THERE is no species of philosophical disquisition attended with more difficulties than that which relates to the operations of the mind;* operations so transient and

* We feel a want of language to express the operations of intellect: our stock of words is insufficient for the purpose; we are unable to express many of our strongest conceptions. Similitude and analogy are commonly substituted for direct expressions, and

unsteady, that they elude the closest grasp of enquiry. Perceptions are infinitely varied in every mind, they are perpetually changing; for the same images do not create the same ideas at one period of life, which they do at another. Mind itself is as infinitely varied as the forms of body; hence the pleasing perceptions commonly implying a *taste for beauty*, must be different in every mind; and the difficulty of reducing its principles to an exact standard

these often feebly, frequently erroneously, convey the idea,

Whatever censure may be thrown upon scholastic learning, yet its labors may become useful towards perfecting the theory of the human mind. We certainly want an abstract language, to facilitate the expression of abstract ideas. We want substantives to appropriate to the variety of mental operations. This deficiency remarkably appears in Smith's Hypothesis of the cause of the fear of death, in his "*Theory of moral sentiments*."

must be obvious. The numerous treatises which have appeared on the subject of taste, are so many proofs of the difficulty of erecting this standard. One says that an object capable of exciting pleasurable sensations must be soft and smooth; another exhausts his eloquence to persuade us that all beauty must be referred to the waving line; whilst a third, with more apparent philosophy, derives it from propriety or utility. He informs us that we must be *convinced* that the object is formed upon principles of reason before the heart can glow with the fine feelings of taste. This idea is urged with great plausibility of truth, but it is certainly erroneous. The effects of beautiful objects are felt, before the mind can form any conclusions respecting their utility. Taste is quicker in its appropriations, than judgment in its deci-

fions. The rule cannot be just, for various parts of nature contradict it; the meanest and most loathsome reptile is as completely formed for every purpose of its creation, as any animal generally esteemed beautiful;—but do we contemplate a toad with rapture?

The most beautiful parts of our ornamental furniture, our paintings, our gildings, in which taste is most eminently displayed, are not reducible to any rules of propriety. They cannot, without a perversion of terms, be denominated *useful*.

If we examine the human countenance and shape, which excites a more animated and more impressive idea of beauty, than any of the scenes of nature, we shall find that utility is not the cause of the rapturous glows which thrill the bosom when the burning eye gazes on the "*human face divine*."

The perception of beauty, as it results from the contemplation of the features, cannot be grounded on any ideas of utility; for a form literally ugly may be capable of every function appertaining to the human character.

The connoisseur will probably tell us that he has made beauty of every sort his particular study, has traced it through all its varieties, has contemplated it with a rapturous eye, in its animated and vegetable forms, that he has thought much, written much, and spoken more on the subject, and that the just reward of his labors should be the exaltation of his opinion as a standard of taste. We bow to his authority, but ere we have time to contemplate with the degree of attention recommended, his ideas of beautiful proportions, another gentleman, who also

arrogates to himself the title of connoisseur, drags us from these absurd notions ; and others, said to be more rational, are placed before us. A chain of reasoning, illustrated by the most striking examples, convince us that our first ideas were fundamentally wrong.

These are facts which are clear and familiar ; and we may observe, that in the fashionable part of taste, *ornamental gardening*, a great variety of opinions has been obtruded on the public, many of which contradict each other. Yet either of the authors of these opinions would feel insulted, were you to deny him the character of a *connoisseur*.

We imagined that we knew something of beautiful proportions, in the disposal of our woods and waters, of our hills and

vallies ; but a gentleman* who lately published an essay on this subject, tells us we are all wrong. He comes forward with great apparent anxiety for truth, (an anxiety generally more ardent when it relates to speculative opinions) and informs us that his sole design is to *expose the present style of improvement* ; but we had scarce time to catch a spark of his vivifying fire, ere another man of taste,† with every mark of indignation, and with all the ardor which characterizes the lover of the fine arts, tells us, that such ideas are vague and unphilosophical.

Can there be then any fixed principles, to which we may refer upon this very flexible

* Mr. Price.

† Mr. Repton,

subject? The beautiful and the deformed, the mean and the sublime, seem to exist more in the imagination of man, than in the works either of nature or art. Taste fluctuates with the manners and temper of the times; its standard is shifted under the influence of religion, legislation, and the fashion of courts. Our national taste for poetry illustrates the observation. In the reign of the second Charles, what the justice of modern criticism terms "*false wit*," was the darling taste of the age. The simple sublime majesty of "*Paradise lost*" was neglected, while the quaint, affected brilliancy of Cowley was extolled as the highest flight of genius. The gay, unfeeling sprightliness of Waller was regarded as the model of the tender style, and the mighty genius of Dryden was forced, in compliance with the absurd fashion of the

day, to disgrace his glowing page with puerile witticisms.

Taste depends not upon reason, therefore it is impossible to reduce it to the standard of invariable maxim. The object of taste is either beauty or sublimity, the characters of which are infinitely diversified, and the intellectual relish must depend on the associations of ideas; these associations are probably widely different in every distinct mind, and the pleasurable sensations must vary accordingly.

The discovery of the true principles of taste (as they are termed) exhibited in the decoration of our habitations, gardens, and persons, and in the wide circle of the imitative arts, is perhaps the result of the recent accumulation of wealth, which vanity thinks not misapplied in the reward of that inventive genius, which can construct novel

combinations of matter. From this principle we may fairly draw a conclusion, that the opinions of what constitutes just taste, must vary with the existing circumstances of the times ; and that it is very probable that posterity in the twentieth century, will feel, or at least affect to feel, astonishment and contempt at the absurd, fantastical ideas of taste which were entertained by their ancestors in the reign of George the third.

If any thing like a standard by which to measure this capricious being be admitted, it must be derived from, and determinable by, the opinions of the majority of mankind. Those points of beauty which depend upon principles of universal nature and feeling, will be considered nearly in the same light by the whole world. The *Venus de Medicis* will be contemplated with

equal rapture, by the Briton, the Gaul, the Spaniard, the Italian, and the Turk; and though the Chinese might object to the size of the feet, and the Savoyard lament the absence of the garter, all perhaps, when their particular exceptions were made, would not hesitate to admit its general beauty.

But the idea of beauty, when applied to the human form, (which being founded on eternal principles of nature, can never vary) is materially different when directed to the multiplied productions of art. A general universal rule of taste can never be established, which the more just, or more fastidious notions of succeeding ages may not destroy. The only mode of determining the popular rage of the day, might perhaps be found by consulting the most esteemed productions of the Poets. The

beautiful objects of nature are their frequent and favorite theme, and the description may be relied upon, as a collection of the most beautiful scenes, that nature decorated by the hand of art can exhibit. If the descriptions of the eminent poets were diligently collated, minutely analyzed, and their constituent principles reduced to rules, they would form as perfect a code of the laws of taste, as the principle is capable of being governed by. They would at least form the foundation of a partial science of beauty, to which few exceptions could be made; for unless there had been opinions of excellence not subject to fluctuation, HOMER and VIRGIL would never have descended to posterity.

But novel opinions must start up, and by the aid of genius and perseverance,

will force themselves into notice. GILPIN himself, the grand discoverer of the picturesque, exhibits in his works strong proofs of the difficulty with which this sort of beauty is reducible to rules. In one place he seems to wish that nature were left to her own operations, an idea, which if taken in a wide sense, would annihilate the term *taste*, as applied to rural ornament, and entirely supersede the necessity of his own observations on the subject. He says that “wherever man appears with his tools deformity follows his steps, that he makes shocking encroachments on the beauty and elegance of landscape. Ceres and Triptolemus are abused for introducing tillage, and thereby “*miserably scratching the face of nature.*” These passages evidently prove that Mr. Gilpin denies to art the privilege of adorning the face of the earth

he is neither to supply deficiencies, nor
 retrench superfluities: for "Man cannot
 " put a twig into the ground without for-
 " mality, and if he put in a dozen toge-
 " ther, let him put them in with what art he
 " pleases, his awkward handy work will
 " hardly ever be effaced." This passage
 seems to give the "coup de grace" to all
 rural improvement. If Mr. Gilpin's ideas
 are accurately examined, they will be
 found frequently to oppose each other; for
 he presumes to censure nature herself, when
 she does not please him. "As in history-
 " painting, figures without drapery and
 " other appendages, make but an indif-
 " ferent group, so in scenery, naked moun-
 " tains form poor composition; they re-
 " quire the drapery of a little wood, to
 " break the simplicity of their shapes, to
 " produce contrast, and to give that rich-

“ness to landscape, which is one of its
 “greatest ornaments.” Here it seems, a
 few twigs planted in man’s awkward way,
 would contribute, by breaking its sameness,
 to embellish the scene. Yet in other parts,
 Mr. Gilpin considers the breach of uni-
 formity as a mortal sin against taste, and
 seems to scruple the admission of a picture
 into an ancient mansion. When taste
 becomes so fastidiously nice, its caprices
 can never be satisfied. A mind delicately
 nursed, and educated in this refined school,
 is like a pampered body, which if exposed
 to common air, is sore in every fibre. In
 other places, this ingenious author speaks
 of the beauties of contrast, a word which
 in the picturesque vocabulary, stands in
 direct contra-distinction to uniformity.

Can we doubt then, the extreme diffi-
 culty of erecting the standard of taste?

or can we feel surprized that one connoisseur differs from another ? Yet it must be confessed that Mr. Gilpin displays, throughout all his works, strong marks of that rare quality which is termed *genius* ;—his very soul seems to animate all his descriptions.

The luxury of taste, as we perceive it displayed in the decoration of the mansion and its appendages, may be considered as the effect of the riches acquired by commerce, and manufacture. When the absolute wants of nature are satisfied, and a surplus of opulence remains, the insatiable appetites of man, eager in the pursuit of gratification, fasten with avidity on every thing able to dissipate for a moment, that *ennui*, which is the general consequence of the indolence of wealth. If traffic should still increase, the luxurious ornaments of life will be proportionably multi-

plied, and the appetite of taste will become so vitiated, that it will loath the plain food which would suit its healthy constitution. The fastidious nicety of taste is one among the many evils which commerce has generated.*

* It is this progress of taste in the mansions and estates of landed Gentlemen, " *by absorbing their whole income, and requiring the constant superintendence of the Master,*" that has deprived them of all political consequence.

Mit-bell on the principles of legislation. p. 369.

The first of these is the fact that the
 Government has been unable to secure
 the necessary funds to carry out its
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This image shows a blank, aged, cream-colored page, likely an endpaper or flyleaf of a book. The paper has a textured appearance with various dark smudges, stains, and a vertical crease near the left edge. Faint, illegible text is visible at the top left, appearing to be the word "THE". The overall tone is light beige with some darker, mottled areas.

VIRTUE
THE
VITAL PRINCIPLE
OF
REPUBLICS.

VIRTUE is the vital principle, which alone can keep the component parts of a democratic form of government from putrefaction. Republics, if animated by this pure and ever active spirit, may reach a height of excellence and glory, unequalled in the annals of the world, and which other forms of government may emulate in vain ; but as virtue must be their sole

foundation, so must corruption hasten them rapidly to their decline. The love of extensive empire presents such seductive allurements to the human mind, that political wisdom seldom possesses fortitude sufficient to resist them. Increase of dominion is the cause of decrease of stability; and those governments will probably be most rapid in their decline, whose conquests were made with the greatest celerity.

Ancient history presents a striking and melancholy picture of the effects of a republican form of government. The licentiousness of popular assemblies opened an ample field for the harangue of the turbulent patriot, as well as for the placid and disinterested orator; but in popular assemblies, the majority must be vicious; and it is the character of vice to sacrifice every

feeling of justice and humanity to the calls of self-gratification. The human heart is prone to corruption. The Athenians were a luxurious and dissipated people. Dissipation and luxury require the sacrifice of a large portion of virtue, to secure their darling fruition. The vital principles of virtue thus weakened,—thus annihilated, we cannot wonder that the Athenian commonwealth sunk under the pressure of its own corruptions.

Can we hope then ever to establish on solid foundations, the structure of a just, and well-proportioned political edifice, to be erected on republican principles? Can we boast that our portion of moral rectitude is increased by the lessons of the fashionable boasted philosophy, or by the precepts of our holy and excellent religion. If we peruse,

with an attentive and impartial eye, the volume of modern history, the number and atrocity of human crimes will appear not to be decreased. Commerce has contributed to weaken those natural energies of virtue, which providence might originally have planted in the human mind. The many incitements to sensual gratifications, consequent on extensive traffic, constitute habits of vicious voluptuousness, which the efforts of reason can never conquer. While gold can purchase the captivating varieties of luxurious enjoyment, the statesman will sacrifice every virtuous emotion, on the altar of a vile and mercenary deity. In modern times, money is the reward of other practices than those of virtue; for the common companions of this long-forgotten, old-fashioned quality, are poverty, neglect, and contempt.

No,—there exists not virtue enough to risque the trial. On this account we deprecate any sudden, and consequently convulsive change of government; for in this case, a man of an active disposition, with a mind strongly tinged with that political enthusiasm which must exist before commotion begins, will endeavour to gain a situation of eminence and profit. Every trick which cunning can devise, and every enormity which daring wickedness can conceive, will be practised to gratify the dearest passions of man, Avarice and Ambition, now loosed from the shackles of law, with their objects full in view.

In this arduous struggle for political pre-eminence, he who can most completely divest himself of the scruples of conscience, will probably be most successful; and the

adverse party, which will cling with a fond embrace to the beloved emoluments, will strive not to be behind in the honourable race. The same *brilliant* qualities will be exerted in the endeavours to prop, as in those to destroy the fabric of ancient institutions.

Political animosities are the most violent of any which disgrace the human mind. They must ever be deprecated by men of feeling and of sober judgment, because they furnish the most ample scope for the display of the vicious passions. Malice, envy, detraction, rapine, and murder, fill but a small part of the copious catalogue of the list of enormities practised by men in eager pursuit of political eminence. When the state is thrown into convulsive anarchy, scraps of abstract visionary philosophy are ill adapted to appease it.

Neither does it appear that any considerable degree of benefit can arise to the community, by the public discussion of theoretical principles of government, and it may with propriety be questioned whether any alteration has been caused in practice, by any writer on politics, from Locke to Edmund Burke. The rights of kings, and those of the people, the duty of passive obedience, and that of resistance in cases of extreme necessity, have been a thousand times discussed without producing any change in the conduct of statesmen or people. Political disquisitions, though at present highly fashionable, appear to be the most useless of any that issue from the press. Actors in the revolutions of kingdoms, are generally men of violent passions, and instigated by insatiable avarice, or boundless ambition; and these

are feelings which never listen to the theories of speculative philosophers. Man must be cast in a new mould, ere the cool flow stream of reason can stem the rapid torrent of his desires. The most lucid treatise on government, furnishes at best but a plausible pretence for the ambitious statesman, or the factious demagogue, to pursue with vigor the object in view.

STATE OF NATURE.

HOW many opinions and arguments have been grounded on the idea of man in a civilized state, contrasted with that of nature! Many writers on this subject seem to think that man was once a ruminating savage; but if we attend to the natural and moral history of the human race, it will appear obvious that man ever was, still is, and ever will be, in a state of nature. The term *artificial* can never, with philosophical precision, be applied to

man. The position of every part of his body, and the peculiar powers of his mind, alike prove him to be an animal formed to provide for his wants in a mode widely different from every other part of the creation. Providence has denied him the sanguinary fang of the tyger, but has refined the organization of his brain, rendered it capable of numberless combinations, and elevated it to such a degree of perfection, that its emanations are dignified by the name of reason, in contradistinction to the inferior quality of instinct; hence the provision for his wants by (as falsely termed) artificial means, is the only natural mode he can pursue. Any other, copied from the practice of inferior animals, would be totally inadequate to the end proposed. Nothing drawn from the refined state of civilization, will affect this argument, nor

any thing from the rapid progress of general knowledge, so conspicuous throughout Europe. Man is formed in such a mould, that his intellectual improvement is progressive. The power of creating ideas by superior reflection, enables him, to make discoveries in every branch of science, and memory treasures up carefully the accumulated stores of its progenitors ; thus something must be added every age to the general stock of knowledge ; and the empire of the mind is continually extending. This gradual progression is perfectly natural ; it appertains as much to the anatomical organization of man, as the sanguinary chase of the fawn to the lyon of Lybia, or the destruction of the sparrow to the swift-winged hawk.

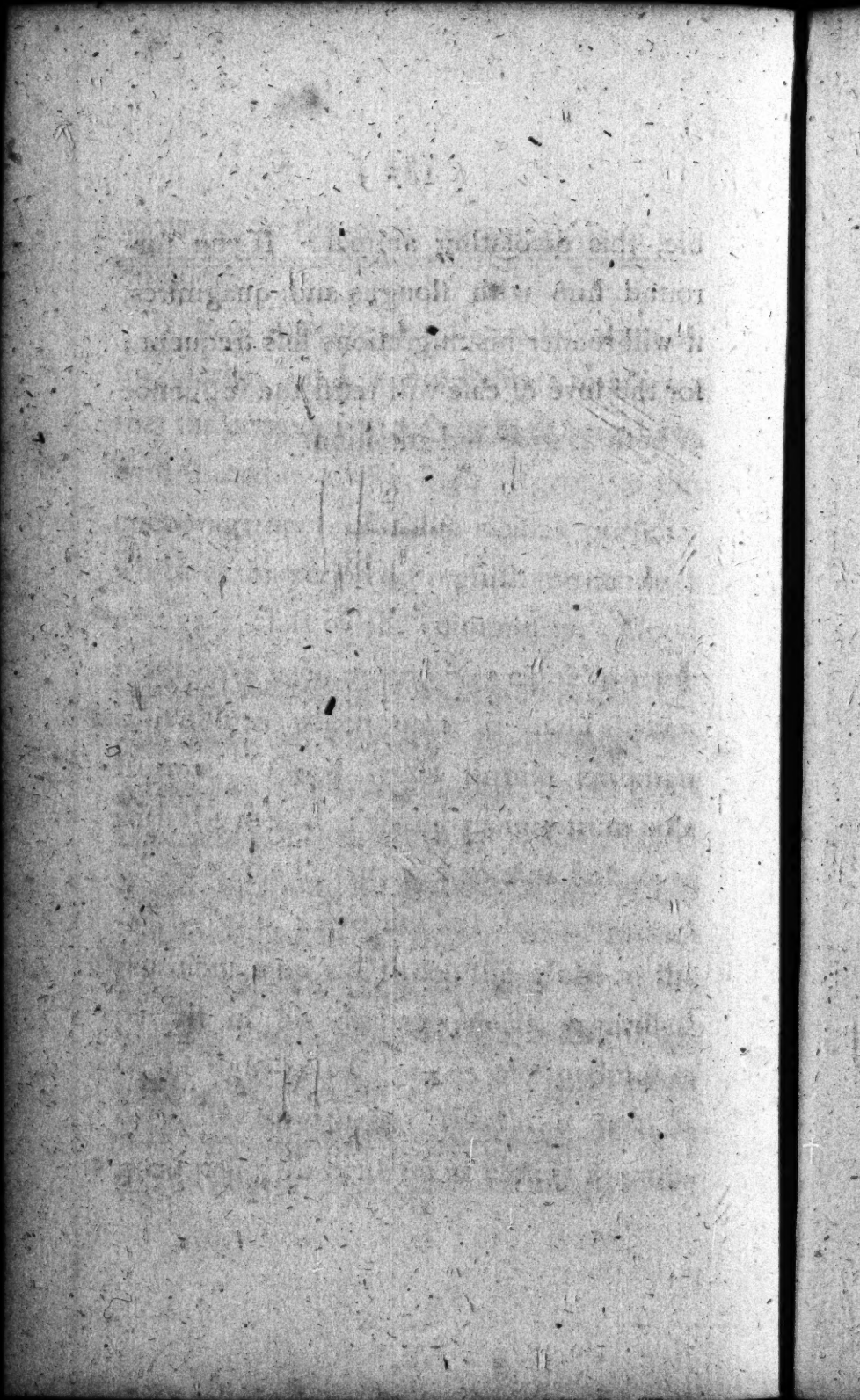
TURNPIKES.

THE great difference which has taken place in manners and opinions, within the last twenty years, owes its origin, in a great measure, to the number and goodness of our public roads. By the general erection of turnpikes, conveyance is facilitated, and literary productions of every sort are dispersed to the remotest corners of the island. Luxury derives considerable support from our improvements, as the produce of every province may be rapidly

conveyed to the most distant parts of the kingdom.

It may appear like the affectation of singularity, but I do not hesitate to affirm, that the amendments of our high-ways have contributed in a very high degree, to the encouragement of those vicious pursuits, which at this period distinguish the conduct of every class of the community. Good roads have been the indirect cause of those convulsions which have so lately shaken Europe. Good roads furnish ambition with the means of flying rapidly from pole to pole, scattering as it goes its brands of destruction. Give him but the means, and rapacious man will sweep the globe in the pursuit of his darling objects, regardless of the sighs and sufferings of thousands of his fellow creatures. Would it not be good policy to confine, as closely as possi-

ble, this desolating animal? If you surround him with sloughs and quagmires, it will render his migrations less frequent; for the love of ease will resist the influence of both avarice and ambition.



(130)

EDUCATION.

IT may admit of doubt, whether the education generally bestowed on youth destined to fill the middle classes of society, either contributes to the real improvement of the understanding, or properly fits it for the sphere in which it will probably move. Classical learning, if it be not kept fresh in the mind by constant use, quickly wears away; yet six or seven years of the most important time of youth, are commonly spent in poring over Virgil, Ovid,

~~and Phadrus, whose works they cannot~~
 then understand, and which probably they
 will never look into, when judgment
 becomes matured; or if curiosity should
 at any time prompt them to review the
 labors of their youth, they will find the
 language no longer familiar.

How many branches of the mathematics
 might be cultivated at a time, when memory
 and fancy are most active and vivacious;
 and of how much more consequence is it for
 a youth designed for commerce to know the
 just proportion of quantity and numbers,
 than to wade through the opposing stream
 of a difficult language in search of the
 unprofitable though beautiful romances of
 Dido and Æneas, or of Hero and Leander.

Classical learning is taught in too super-
 ficial a manner to fix the attention of a
 boy. On the contrary, if the principles

of quantity and numbers are attained (as they must be) by unwearied diligence, he would acquire *habits* of attention, regularity, and calculation, which would highly conduce to the happiness of a mercantile life. That diligent industry which by slow but sure gradations rises to wealth, is generally the offspring of a mind, well grounded in the theory and practice of minute calculation.

I would not be understood to decry the value of those elegant acquirements, which more than all other accomplishments, contribute to elevate the intellectual character of man; acquirements, which as the Roman Orator elegantly tells us, "*adorn and improve every situation:*" but the principal aim of the present age, is to be rich without liberality of sentiment, and great without enlargement of understand-

ing—to glitter not to glow. Let not the Merchant, who has toiled through a long life in the attainment of his immense fortune, be misled by the ostentation of wealth, to make his children *Scholars*, for he will by that means prepare them for the dissipation of the wealth, which patient industry, and parsimonious self-denial has accumulated, and which is dearer to him than life itself.

FORMATION

OF

SOCIETY.

How many ingenious theories have been formed on the first organization of civil society. We are told that man soon discovered his wants, and that his wants drove him into association. This mode of accounting for it is too artificial; it supposes the operation of an educated mind, and is the child of refinement, not of nature. Whence our own island was first peopled, is hidden in an impenetrable obscurity; but the period is obviously very

remote. Its inhabitants were considerably increased by the inroads of the Danes, Saxons, and Normans, who came, not for purposes of association, but for those of plunder.

There seems no instinctive motive for association in the human bosom, and to suppose union on the principle of reason and common interest, is to give the mind that degree of knowledge, which can only arise from an experience of the convenience of society, comprehending its varieties of enjoyments, and securities, none of which could have entered into the imagination of a wandering savage.

The wilds of America were peopled, not by a populous fraternity, deriving advantages from the effects of association; but by small and scattered tribes, hostile to each other, and whose ferocities still con-

tinue to diminish the number of the human race. Man destitute of all the amenities which spring from civilized refinement, is a savage, cruel as the tyger, and even in his most polished state, where force is restrained by the fetters of law, cunning occupies its place. The same passions take a different, because a necessary direction.

But the subject does not require deep research ; the origin of civil society may be traced in the natural indolence of man, which prefers the more easy and immediate profit, acquired by rapine, to the more slow, and more remote reward of patient and laborious industry. The pursuit of this favorite mode of acquiring subsistence, rendered the association of individuals necessary, for the purposes of annoyance and repellance. The prædatory bands,

thus connected by a common interest, exhibited symptoms of a firmness of friendship, and an ardor of benevolence for their own members, which are entirely foreign to the genuine impulses of nature. The sense of a more important self-interest was gratified, by a faithful adherence to the virtues of constancy, and affection, whilst every evil was to be apprehended from their violation.

**MISS SEWARD, DR. DARWIN,
GRAY, AND COLLINS.**

MISS Seward's beautiful poem of **LOUISA** has been censured as containing a great number of meretricious ornaments, and she has been accused of accumulating in this dramatic character, glaring metaphor, and ostentatious splendor. This charge is to be found in a very respectable publication, the authors of which have eminently served the cause of literature—it is to be found in the **Monthly Review**.

"Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri," is the proper motto for literary disquisitions; and the editors of this elegant and generally just repository of criticism, have too much candour to deny to others that right which they themselves always exercise.

But I conjecture the critic formed his idea of the excellence of poetry entirely on the school of Pope, and his archetypes, the classic authors of Greece and Rome. It must be confessed, that if a modern poet was bound to confine himself to any particular manner without the least admixture, the ancient classics are doubtless to be preferred; but as the end of Poetry, as an art, is to captivate the imagination by seizing powerfully on the passions, it may be doubted whether a happy and judicious assemblage of the various excellencies of

different poetic schools, may not be more likely to constitute a perfect poem, than a strict and servile adherence to a single model.

A rich and copious supply of materials has been discovered in the Gothic fictions and legendary tales of the dark ages; tales which by the romantic singularity of their character, are peculiarly adapted to poetry; and if we add to the wild nature of the fable, the scenery that necessarily accompanied it, the ancient castle with its appendages, the gloomy grove, the moat, the Barbican, and the draw-bridge; images which by association create the ideas of assault, danger, and tumult; the *terrible* is excited, and the mind thrown back to the twelfth century, busies itself in no unpleasing contemplation on the events which that period produced. This I conceive to

be the exact state of the soul when it is most capable of exercising its poetical powers. Mr. Hayley, whose critical judgment is almost equal to his genius (which is paying his judgment a very extravagant compliment) is a warm advocate for this mixture of poetical imagery. He wished to unite in his "Triumphs of Temper," some portion of the sportive wildness of Ariosto, with the classic elegance and the moral graces of Pope; and this union, which it must be allowed he has happily effected, contributes in a very great degree to the excellence of that charming poem.

The "Louisa" may perhaps be ornamented in a somewhat richer style than the "Serena," but the materials are of elegant contexture, and of genuine value, the real diamonds of Golconda, not the paltry Bristol-stone.

The ornamental parts of Miss Seward's poetry consists in rich and glowing metaphors, of apt, beautiful, and appropriate imagery, and in a beautiful display of the face of nature. Her pictures are all taken from the life, they breathe vivid on her canvass, and bespeak not the servile copies of a lifeless dauber, but the bold and animated strokes of an original, complete master.

If it were possible to take away those appendages to "Louisa," which have been termed superfluous ornaments, this poem would be dwindled into the shadow of a shade, its spirit would be evaporated, and a caput mortuum would alone remain. The elegant attire of Anna's muse, her captivating smile, and the easy graces of her motion, constitute her most engaging attractions.

A late performance, entitled "The pursuits of Literature," has censured Dr. Darwin on account of the gaudiness of his poetical decorations. The author of this satire, we readily confess, possesses great powers for didactic verse. He appears to have formed the model of his poem on that of the Dunciad, and he has conveyed his critical opinions, not only in the text, but in very copious notes. This performance is popular, and without doubt is distinguished by very considerable critical acumen; but its celebrity may proceed as much from its satirical cast of sentiment, as from the justness of its observations.

Yet the genius of Darwin will always be considered as of the first order, that happy art which he has attained of embellishing a dry subject in natural history with all the graces of the most exquisite poetry, must

entitle him to rank as one of the first of English Poets. In point of that enthusiasm of soul, that "ignis ardens animæ," which has been said to constitute the great poet, the author of the *Botanic Garden* is far superior to Pope. His style is not so like that of Darwin's style, like that of Miss Steward, is a happy mixture of the Italian, with the Grecian school, but he is by no means a servile copier of either; he has paid (what every writer ought to do) a close attention to nature; he has depicted her lovely features in the most glowing and beautiful colors; and he has captivated the heart of the reader by a thousand new combinations of imagery, equally novel and just.

But Darwin is a naturalist and a philosopher of no mean stature; and he has evinced, contrary to the general, but erroneous opinion, that the two studies of natural

history, and of the elegant arts, are not incompatible with each other; on the contrary, the effect is increased by the mutual polish which they communicate. Darwin has displayed such an exquisite art in the management of his materials, that his beauties rise upon us by a regular gradation, and we feel their excellency without perceiving the efforts of genius and judgment which created them.

Addison, in his periodical essays, has justly boasted that he brought philosophy from schools and closets, and introduced her to the company of fine gentlemen and fashionable ladies, into coffee-houses and taverns; and the author of the " Loves of the Plants," may claim the rare merit of uniting the utmost precision of natural history, with the most finished graces of poetical imagery and diction.

Slaves as we are to fashion, we should not suffer it to corrupt our national taste. The appeal is certainly just, when we object to the standard of Aristotle, and resort to that of nature.

It is not presumed to detract from the transcendent merit of Pope, as a poet; his fame is too firmly fixed for the feeble breath of modern criticism to shake. Yet some of his pieces are mere copies, without animation, and unadapted to the language and country into which they are introduced. The pastorals may claim excuse, when the juvenile years of their author are considered. With no other merit than that of a highly polished and mellifluous versification, we see nothing but what we have before seen in Theocritus and Virgil, and seen to much more advantage.

The inimitable poems of Gray have been censured for their cumbrous load of ornament, and for the amplitude and variety of his imagery; it must be confessed that this genius is very different from that of Pope; but as an elegant and judicious critic has observed, we have seen the time when *Churchill* was preferred to *Gray*;* we cannot wonder then that *Pope*, of whom *Churchill* was a coarse and slovenly imitator, should at the same æra have been far more esteemed.

The great merit of philosophical language consists in reducing its expressions to a sort of mathematical precision; we should suffer no words to convey ideas which have a tendency to excite the imagination, and cause it to wander in search of

* J. Warton.

novel associations which strike the fancy, but enlighten not the understanding.

A style of a very opposite nature must constitute the language of Poetry. The object here is to convey pleasure, not information to the mind, therefore it must be solely adapted to excite emotions of a merely pleasing nature. The more appropriate the images, and the more particular the descriptions, the more will the style be truly poetical.*

But the style of many of the poems of Pope is so little removed from that of plain prose, that there are ten thousand successful imitators of him, for one of Milton, Gray, Collins, or Thomson. Fashion has contributed so much to exalt the poetical

* Stewart's elements of the philos. of the human mind.

character of the Twickenham bard, that it is very unsafe to hazard the least reflection on his genius ; but there are many, whose just critical taste cannot be questioned, who do not scruple to assert that he has introduced a manner which does not rise to excellence. His reflections are in general trite and common, dressed up in neat versification, which are imposed on the world for genuine poetry ; but genuine poetry is wholly composed of sensible images, moral reflections are only to be sparingly made use of.

The elegant and tender Collins has beautifully illustrated this idea ; he describes the sterility of a country, but he does not directly assert this in an elegant and neat line, as Pope would probably have done, but by the sensible image of

“ Nor ever vernal bee was heard to murmur there.”

Every abstract quality should, as in this line be expressed by an image characteristic of it. It may be asserted that this cannot be done in didactic, or philosophical poetry, such as the "Essay on Man;" but are we too confident in being of opinion that where it cannot be done, the subject is fitter for prose?

Pope frequently invents the rule of right; instead of applying sensible language to abstract ideas, he applies abstract language to sensible ideas. It is not meant to deny his claim to genius, but he seems to be classed too high in the scale of Fame, and some in the ardor of their adorations for their exalted idol, have thought it necessary to sacrifice the reputation of every competitor on the altar of their beloved Dagon.

To my favorite and beloved Collins,

thus casually introduced, I cannot forbear paying the feeble tribute of my applause. If I am warmed with enthusiasm in my admiration of him, if that enthusiasm should proceed from false views, yet I may be pardoned, because it is perfectly harmless. In our opinions upon the productions of the poets, we are not criminal if our fancy gets the better of our judgment, we risque nothing if our zeal be not according to knowledge.

The poetry of Collins consists of natural simplicity, gothic fiction, fine allegory, plaintive tenderness, classical spirit, descriptive beauty and sublimity. I say descriptive, for the sublime in sentiment,* upon the principles of *Longinus* is not per-

* Sublime in sentiment, void of imagery, is more peculiarly the province of the tragic muse.

haps to be found very frequently in Collins. Sentiment is a walk in his art in which he did not particularly excel; his oriental eclogues, where it is most to be met with, contain nothing which can in the most distant degree be compared with the pastoral ballads of Shenstone. Whenever he attempted it he failed, as may be seen by the wretched conceits* with which he very unsuitably concludes his dirge,—his beautiful dirge in *Cymbeline*.

In his ode, Collins obviously imitated the songs of the Greek Chorus. Euripides was his master in the pathetic, but his chief excellence was in his allegorical painting, for which perhaps he was mostly indebted to nature and observation.

* "Belov'd 'till life can charm no more."

"And mourn'd 'till Pity's self be dead."

The ode to the passions is generally esteemed his masterpiece ; but beauty rather than sublimity is its character. The picture of cheerfulness is very distinctly and exquisitely drawn. The idea in it

“ Satyrs and sylvan boys were seen

“ Peeping from forth their alleys green,”

is very similar to one of the sportive positions in which the loves are exhibited in the celebrated painting of the marriage of Alexander, and Collins might have read “ Du Bos,” where it is described.

Nature, elegance, and a rich luxuriance of poetic fancy, shine with distinguished lustre throughout the works of Collins. The following lines are equal to Gray :

“ They would have thought who heard the strain

“ They saw in Tempe’s vales her native maids,

“ Amidst the festal sounding shades,

" To some unwearied minstrell dancing,
" While as his flying fingers kiss'd the strings,
" Love fram'd with mirth a gay, fantastic round—
" Loose were her tresses seen, her zone unbound;
" And he amidst his frolic play,
" As if he would the charming air repay,
" Shook thousand odours from his dewy wings."

The connection between Poetry and Sculpture, has often been noticed, and is at least as old as the Furor of Virgil, in the temple of Janus. Collins's short ode to mercy, the last four lines excepted, is a series of beautiful *bas reliefs* in the classical antique.

The ode to Liberty is truly sublime; it opens in the true spirit of a chorus song of SOPHOCLES. The fall of the Roman Empire is at all times a great object of contemplation. When Mr. Gibbon says at the conclusion of his history, " It was

amidst the ruins of the capitol I conceived the first design of writing this history," the idea which is awakened in the mind is as vast as it is capable of receiving : yet Collins is hardly less sublime.

" How Rome before thy weeping face
With heaviest found a giant Statue fell,
Push'd by a wild and artless race
From off its wide ambitious base
When time his northern sons of spoil awoke,
And all the blended work of strength and grace
With many a rude repeated stroke,
And many a barb'rous yell to thousand fragments
broke."

The idea is well pursued in the lines which follow it; an equally sublime part of this Ode is the Antistrophe, particularly the following lines :

" To the blown Baltic then they say
The wild waves found another way,

Where Orcas howls his wolfish mountains rounding
 Till all the banded west at once 'gan rise,
 A wide wild storm ev'n nature's self confounding,
 With'ring her giant sons with strange uncouth surprize.
 This pillar'd earth so firm and wide,
 By winds and inward labors torn,
 In thunders dread was push'd aside,
 And down the should'ring billows borne."

These lines are very grand, but the idea is not novel; the separation of an island from the continent had before exercised the muse of *Virgil*.

In the use of epithets, Collins is generally successful, but sometimes a little overstrained. "With'ring power," in the ode to fear, is exquisite; but "dark power," from the association of fear with darkness, is pushing common sense to the utmost verge of thought.

Eclogue 2.

" A fan of painted feathers in his hand,
To guard his *shaded* face from scorching sand."

Shaded is here superfluous.

I shall conclude these observations on the odes and eclogues, with noticing the very beautiful figure in the ode to evening.

" Winter *yelling* through the troublous air."

We need not seek for the cause why the poetry of Gray and Collins strikes the imagination with a sensation of which the term *rapture* conveys but a very feeble idea. They are the Poets of Nature, and Nature contains within herself abundant sources of pleasure.

THE RESPECTIVE INFLUENCE
OF THE PRINCIPLES OF
CHIVALRY,
AND THE
FEUDAL SYSTEM,
AND THE MODERN SPIRIT OF
COMMERCE & LIBERTY
UPON THE
HAPPINESS OF MAN.

THE improvements, as they are termed, which have taken place in the internal police of nations, have been produced by the liberality and freedom of thought, which has succeeded implicit confidence in established opinions. The language of truth has defined with accuracy and precision the rights of the human race. The

chains of superstition which were forged by craft, and rivetted by power, have been burst asunder by the stronger force of reason; the feudal system is abolished; arts and sciences flourish; liberty is defined with a philosophical exactness, and demanded with a vehement ardor, bordering on madness; while the independance of opinion is as firmly established as the natural propensity of man to persecution on this account will permit.

This change ought to be favorable to the happiness of mankind. It would be presumptuous to assert that the light communicated by science, and by the free discussion of topics which naturally affect human felicity, have been the principal causes of his misery; but as a question of abstract truth, I very much suspect that the increase of knowledge has lessened the

number of real enjoyments; that the violent pursuit of liberty is not attended with those benefits which it seems to promise, and that the romantic system of chivalry was better calculated to produce and to cherish those virtues which are favorable to the happiness of society in general, and to the private felicity of the individual.

The system to which I refer, is that pure institution of chivalry which was founded on the strictest integrity of conduct, dignified by the most exalted generosity of soul, and embellished by the most elegant refinement of manners; a system which has ennobled our national character, and produced a spirit of heroic enterprize, which the present disgusting triviality of manners has not wholly extinguished. Such was the feudal system, ere the base inroads of wealth, and the luxuries generated by an

increasing commerce, * had changed the office of a protector to that of an oppressor; ere the amiable virtues of love and friendship were rudely crushed by the selfish vices of fraud and rapacity.

It is not my intention, nor does it come within our limits, to trace minutely the picture of the remote age of refined gallantry, and heroic achievement; it will be sufficient to the reflections intended to be drawn from it, if we pourtray the most striking outlines of the portrait.*

There are few who have not read and admired the good sense displayed in the inimitable work of CERVANTES; but as it would be uncandid to form our opinions

* For more minute information, the reader may consult M. de St. Palaye's ingenious work upon Chivalry.

of the intrinsic merit of chivalry from a professed satire upon the abuse of it, it may be sufficient for the impartial investigator to oppose to the Quixote of romance, the Bayard* of real life.

The system of chivalry tended to produce the greatest perfection of character; the courage of the knight was restrained from degenerating into ferocity, by habitual courtesy; he was to soothe by the most winning affability, that awe which a superiority of rank creates; he was to encourage by an ingenuous frankness, an easiness of access, and to anticipate affection by an engaging eloquence; he was to abhor violence and rapine, from the hatred of injustice, and was superior to the feelings

* Bayard fell at the retreat of the French in the Milanese. Anno 1524.

of envy, from a principle of universal benevolence ; the love of equity was to be annexed to his privilege of magistracy,* and a liberal generosity to the opulence of his station ; he was to adorn social intercourse by a graceful decorum, by a sweetness and modesty of temper. The general dignity of his character was to be sustained by an inviolable attachment to truth, by an aversion to deceit, by a punctilious

* Warton (Hist. of Eng. Poet. Vol. 1. 70, 438.) observes, that even the office of Coroner, was anciently executed by men of the greatest respectability. The preamble of C. 2. 3d. Ed. 1. complains of mean and indiscreet persons being elected to this office, and orders them to be chosen from the most loyal and wise Knights (Chevaliers) and there appears to have been good reason for this statute ; for the Sheriffs and other officers of Justice (4 Ed. 3d.) in Co. Glo. were Tho. Ld. Berkeley's household servants, and of his standing wages in livery.

Lives of the Berkeley Family. M. S. v. 2, p. 270.

honor, and by a strict adherence to his word. Of the fame of the fair sex he was to be nicely solicitous; and a devotion to their interests was on all occasions his darling principle. He was taught to regard the ties of friendship with peculiar sacredness, and his piety in the cause of the church, and his gallantry in that of the fair, was to be fervent and active. The immediate reproof of the elder Knights was directed to suppress the encroaching arrogance, or the tumid boasting of the younger; and the express laws of the institution enjoined him to narrate without disguise, even his ignominious adventures, to the Herald who recorded them.* To

* Romances of recent events written by Heralds, seemed to have been begun in the 14th century.

Warton's Hist. Eng. Poet. v. 1. p. 331.

these virtues every grace of the gymnastic, social, or elegant kind, was to be united ; and had not the immature manners of the times spread an intellectual grossness over the mind, and disfigured the beauty of the system ; had not the universal preponderating cupidity of military exploit,† or the jealous sensibility of gentilical pride, sometimes been the parent of oppression and injustice, we should rather feel inclined to condemn than admire the satire of Cervantes.

† M. de St. Palaye mentions an instance of a rebellion of Peasants against their Lords, whom a few Knights attacked, and by their superior discipline, easily dispersed. The Knights, from their habits of thinking, felt highly indignant at this breach of subjection. The insurrection ought to have been suppressed, but the grievances of the Peasants should have been attended to.

Though we admit that the jealousy of military distinction must have kept the fears of the Knight constantly awake ; though the dread of defeat must sometimes have haunted him, and the fatigue of his profession have caused a struggle between nature and art ; yet there was no other part of the system which was not calculated to ennoble and gratify himself, and to bless others. Irreproachable and excellent in his domestic character, we behold it formed of the affectionate father, and the amiable husband ; the fond, but respectful attentions, which he was in the habit of paying and receiving, must have spread a soft and complacent pleasure over his bosom, and the wise reserve of a dignity that was never forgotten, have kept at a great distance, the disgusting encroachments of a contemptuous familiarity.

The virtues which the Knight was incited to practise, uniformly tended to exalt that ambition of personal excellence, and that elevation of character, upon which was founded the basis of his happiness; and if we except such interruptions to it as the passions might occasion, the private life of the Knight, or the Baron, was perfectly consonant to the feelings which their stations naturally produced. Their active habits, (and action is the only uncloying pleasure) were consulted in the nature of their amusements, their pride and grandeur, in the state which attended their domestic oeconomy, and their power, and love of sway, in the ready and unreluctant submission of all ranks below them. Courtship, that universally acknowledged source of pleasure, formed a part of their accomplishments. In the enjoyments of the

feudal castle, all was splendid, gratifying, and entertaining. There might exist little of reason,* and much of puerility, but the niceness of critical taste did not operate

* If the pre-eminence or degradation of the human mind be estimated by the strong, or by the feeble exertion of manly qualities, which display the excellence of reason, in the discovery of moral or natural truths, if we compute its perfection by the various and brilliant flights of an ardent imagination, we may search for it in vain in feudal ages ; in this view the state of the mind in these times will be esteemed by the enlightened modern, as truly deplorable. The miracles of the church, the fallacies of judicial astrology, and charms in medicine, were objects of serious credibility. The taste of that age, widely different from that of the present, rejected simplicity, and displayed a profusion of ornament. Wit consisted only of gross ridicule, and low buffoonery ; poetry was composed of incident and narrative, without the least mixture of sentiment ; every thing bore, not an intellectual, but a mechanic and sensible cast ; dexterity was more cultivated than ability, entertainment more than improvement, and ennui was to be banished, not by mental exertion, but by a direct

to the destruction of their felicity ; and it is to be remembered, that Milton, both whose *Allegro* and *Penforoso* characterize two distinct kinds of happiness, abstracted

occupation of the bodily faculties. The system of Chivalry was too perfect for the reason of the age : Education was an artificial habit, the mere plating of affectation, on a mind and character rude and boisterous.

But this does not affect the point in question. A highly cultivated mind, if it has a keen sense of refined pleasures, is at the same time more open to that of pain. (*Vide character of Fleetwood in the mirror.*) Neither has the soul of exquisite feeling any enjoyment in sensual luxuries : its pleasures must be highly impregnated with intellectual spice, and served up by the skill of a refined cook, ere they can be relished by his nicely discriminating palate. Does any modern man of taste enjoy the silly jests of a merry-andrew ? Yet these jests, coarse as they are, easily provoke the laugh of the ignorant rustic ; we have only to decide whether a coarse, or a refined taste, is most likely to meet with the greater number of pleasurable objects adapted to it. The answer is obvious—the refined mind must rest in self-approbation.

from sense, has drawn from these ages, the principal images which adorn those beautiful poems; and who is there that does not feel the justice of his sentiments?

Indeed, if we examine it strictly, we shall find that the whole private life of this age forms the pleasurable part of the present. Hawks, hounds, conversation, music, gallantry, dancing, splendid and brilliant spectacles, were not then periodical relaxations, but usual habits of living, subject only to the interruptions of war, or those of civil business; nor can we presume to question the happiness of a state of life which was more perfect as it regarded the modes of pleasure, than that enjoyed by the modern noble; their residence was always in the country, a situation which has ever been considered as the best adapted to felicity, as is evident from the sense,

use and application of the word paradise.

Nor had the feudal system a tendency unfavorable to some of the most sublime virtues which adorn the human mind; bounty, gratitude, fidelity, and honour, branched out from the throne to the barony, the mesne tenantry, and the inferior subinfeudations. But the mind of the vassal was narrowed within the sphere of his immediate relations; beyond these, he knew not neighbourly or social regards. Habits of war, and violence, could not have been favorable to the promotion of humanity; and we perceive in the vulgar civil punishments, both low humour, and brutality, not unfrequent concomitants of each other.*

* As the ducking stool for scolding women, at Shepton Mallet in Somersetshire. Hugh de Vivone,

The influence of the abject submission under which, both from habit and interest, the feudal vassal laboured, must subdue many of those impulses which nature might

Lord of the Manor, (Hen. 3d.) set up one of these, which Michael de Ambresbury, Lord Abbot of Glastonbury, with some difficulty removed, by a suit at law.

Collinson's Somerset. iii. 360.

The Saxons, (for this stool is of great antiquity) called it a scealung stool: that is, a chair wherein scolding women sitting, were ducked in the water. Blount's ancient tenures, p. 151. At some of the courts held by the Lords of the Manor of Scarborough, Co. Somers. in the 3d. of Rd. 3d. two women were presented as common scolds, and fined 1d. each. At the same time an order was made by the Court, that the tenants should not scold their wives, under pain of forfeiting their cottages. In the 23d. Hen. 7th. an order was also made that tenant's wives should not scold, under the penalty of 6s. 8d. *Collinson ut sup.* v. 2. p. 173. At the Manor Court of Chelsea, 2d. Rd. 2d. the wife of P. Wells was fined 6d. as a common babbler.

Lyson's Env. Lond. v. 2. p. 74.

generate, of acting up to the dignity of a moral agent; and the necessity of the guilty situations into which his obligations to his Lord * frequently threw him, was often incompatible with the exercise of virtue. To follow the chief to overawe a Court of Justice, to rush from the Castle† to plunder the neighbouring country, to give a verdict at the will of a Sheriff,‡ or

* Ankarette, wife of William Twyniho was by means of George, Duke of Clarence, forcibly carried off to Warwick, and under his menaces tried, condemned and executed. Collinson ut sup.

See also Fenn's original letters. v. 3. p. 118.

† Though many of these crimes originated in the state of the times, yet the ability of committing them was owing to the private military establishments of the feudal system.

‡ For instances of tampering with juries, Vide Fenn's Letters of the Paston Family 11. 273.

to commit deliberate perjury,* were examples, the exercises of which must in a great measure, extinguish all philanthropical and social feeling,† and unfortunately for the people of that age, jurisprudence formed no part of the military education of the baron, or the accomplishments of the higher vassal, notwithstanding the ex-

* Carew. Stowe. Andrews.

† Our Kings were not much more attentive to the laws, than the Barons. Hen. 4th caused Archbishop Scroop to be executed without trial, by his own order only; and Jac. 1st, on his entry into this country, caused a cut-purse taken in the fact at Southwell, to be instantly hanged. (Rastall's Hist. of Southwell.) Sir Hen. Spelman supposes that the power of inflicting capital punishments became obsolete in the Baronial Courts, through the errors of the Stewards; the consequence of which was sometimes the loss of their privileges.

Vid. Ld. Lyttlet. Hist. Hen. 2d. v. 5th, p. 312.

ercise of jurisdiction was vested in themselves.

But though the education of the vassal was purely military, and consequently excluded the knowledge of many moral and relative duties, yet that school is an excellent one for the improvement of the rustic; there he acquires habits of cleanliness, agility, grace, self-command, obedience, patience, manly behavior, reconciliation to pain, labor, and danger, and contempt of death. The instances are frequent, where we see visible marks of an improved character in the retired veteran.

This account of the virtues and vices which were generated by the feudal system, will be found to be tolerably accurate; and if we examine their effects on the felicity of man, I think the balance will incline in favor of ancient manners. Among the

virtues of former times, we register a high sense of honor, a generous gallantry, which begat self-esteem, a manly frankness, which prevented the pain of conscious hypocrisy, a soundness of heart, which preserved internal comfort, a fraternal union, that was the parent of all the pleasures attendant upon disinterested amity, a disdain of bodily sufferings when pursuing the line of duty, an attentive regard, the offspring of exalted reverence for the fair sex, and a fervent sincerity of devotion. From these feelings may be traced many of those causes which influence the real happiness of man. The sense of honor was the parent of integrity, which spares the frequent blush of mortified guilt. The body, inured to hardships and fatigue, was enabled to bear without murmuring the various attacks

of disease, which are rendered more excruciating by impatience and effeminacy; for bodily pain, or rather that imbecility of mind which renders corporeal feelings peculiarly acute, forms a large portion of the sum of human miseries.

Unqualified reverence for the fair sex, is not only the most natural, but the most noble and generous passion that can animate the human heart; and the preservation of the female character in its greatest purity, is one of the grand barriers which must defend the state from the inroads of political profligacy; for the natural attention which the stronger sex pays to the softer, will produce a correspondent dignity of manners, by habits of constant assimilation. If an unaffected sense of honor prevails in the female bosom, the man who is suing for her smiles, must at

least wear the semblance of probity and temperance; but female indelicacy will destroy every atom of public and private virtue; it gives a flowing rein to the dissolute profligacy of men, whose passions unrestrained on their attacks on female chastity, will range unconfined through every path of moral and political enormity.

If we examine the influence of the feudal system on the happiness of females in the middle and lower ranks of society, its favorable effect must have been very considerable; instead of being educated in the acquirement of accomplishments productive of ambition and misery, they were brought up as attendants on ladies of rank, and instructed in all the arts which qualified them for the proper discharge of every domestic duty, and though from the influence of general refinement, more attention

is necessarily due to accomplishments, yet there is an *excess* of regard paid to the elegant and the attractive, which has not a happy effect on the female character, because it gives an unnatural priority of rank to the ornamental, over the useful, destructive to the indispensable virtue of oeconomy, and the diligent superintendence of a family.

The necessity of sincere religion in securing the happiness of individuals, is almost universally acknowledged, even in this age of general licentiousness. A spirit that blunts the arrows of adversity, that checks the ambitious arrogance, and preserves the temperance of prosperity. A spirit which gives the soul a foretaste of the exquisite felicity of a future state, to which every hope and every idea is exalted. A spirit that communicates patience in life,

and a triumphant fortitude in death, must spread over the soul, that calm serenity, that constant cheerfulness, which constitutes the definition of happiness.

It must be admitted, that the felicity which arises from the consciousness of freedom, and a mild, uniform operation of law and police could not be enjoyed by the feudal vassal ; but the subjection and insecurity under which he laboured, was submitted to with little reluctance,* and we may observe, that personal attachment (to which a willing obedience is concomitant) may be mingled with it, as well as an opinion of possessing a real interest in

* The emancipation of the Scottish Clans from their feudal ties, was by no means satisfactory to them ; they had no wish for freedom ; it was the measure of government to prevent rebellion.

the bosom of the Lord. This idea must be the parent of pleasure, for it is the gratification of self-consequence. The revelry of the Castle Hall alleviated the labors of peace; minstrelsy, archery, the holiday, and the rural sports, were powerful charms to generate friendships, and repel the approaches of care; whilst the picturesque superstition of the Church† contributed to the common felicity. A relief from the burden of guilt was easily obtained, and that relief was believed to be efficacious.

Perhaps the roughness of manners which existed in ancient times, and which in some degree forms a contrast with the polish of

† Perhaps superstition was at its acme in the reign of Canute; the bombast language of some of his laws is unequalled, even by the puritans of the last century.

modern ones, may be deemed to wound the felicities of life ; but grossness was not a source of misery, for it blunted the edge of suffering, without diminishing the capacity of enjoying. Anger is, indeed, a temporary madness, but it is a relief of nature ; and where there is a sense of personal dignity, leaves no stings of penitence behind ; and as the prevalence of rude manners was general, no pain could be felt from the apprehensions of disgrace.

Want, the most general cause of misery, existed in a very low degree, under the feudal system ; immense charities, the munificence of the Lords, and the hospitality of the Abbey,* prevented the visitation of

* Henry Jenkins, of celebrated longevity, remembered the dissolution of Abbeys, and the "*great lamentation which was made on that account.*" When

hunger. Thus there was at all times a resource for their natural and pleasurable

he was Butler to Lord Conyers of Hernby Castle, Marmaduke Bradley, Ld. Abbot of Fountains, did frequently visit his Lord, and take a hearty glass with him. His Lord frequently sent him to know how the Abbot did, who always sent for him to his lodgings, and after ceremonies, as he called it, past, besides Waffells (fine bread) ordered him a quarter of a yard of Roast Beef for his dinner. He says, the Monasteries did deliver their Priests meat by measure, and a great black jack of strong drink.

Gough's Brth. Topog. 11. p. 461.

We may notice from this account, that the Capital of the Nation, which is now employed in commercial pursuits, personal indulgences, and loans to government, was then consumed in hospitality, charitable foundations, &c. Six hundred and sixty-six appears to have been (according to the day book of the Comptrollers of the Wardrobe) the number of poor relieved by Edward 1st. every Sunday; but the numbers differed on the Saint's day which occurred in the week. The prospect of our modern foreign commerce began to dawn in the reign of Elizabeth, and was begun by the Nobility: money was at that

wants, whilst the gnawing sensations of discontent were scarcely felt. The barba-

time scarce, and the people called Merchants, were generally Factors to the men of landed property, who were in possession of the great mass of wealth. Wool and Lead were the two principal articles of our exports. The Earl of Shrewsbury, (who possessed valuable mines) and Lord Burleigh, exported lead; and the Earl of Leicester was deeply engaged with the Muscovy Company, then newly incorporated.

Lodge's Illustrat. Brit. Hist. v. 11. p. 211.

In the 39th Eliz. eleven poor bills were brought into Parliament. The injunctions upon keeping up hospitality in those days are well known; and to what comparatively inferior orders of society they extended, we may learn from the Acts of Archb. Parker's visitation in 1561; where Robert Floter, Curate of Monkton, in the Isle of Thanet, is noted as "A Priest, unmarried, ignorant of Latin, not hospitable, having no Benefice."

Lewis's Hist. of Thanet. p. 62

What is the inference? Henry dissolved Abbies, Commerce introduced Luxury, and Hospitality perished. Poor-rates have been substituted; a change better for the superior, but worse for the inferior orders.

rism of the age was natural, and therefore disregarded ; unacquainted with the conveniences of modern times, it was impossible they could feel their loss.

The chains of slavery, we are told, are burst asunder ; knowledge has been increasing in all its branches, and liberty is called for by the universal voice of the world ; paradoxical as it may appear, I am seriously of opinion, that these circumstances have produced no increase of happiness to the human race ; for man is cast in such a mould, that the same disposition which prompts him to pursue with avidity the light of science, which inflames his soul with the vivid flame of liberty, will inevitably plunge him into difficult situations, from which a more limited sphere of knowledge, and the coercion of a severer system of policy, would certainly have preserved him.

The benefits diffused by science in this age, (and in no age have the moral and political branches of it been more studied) which augment the real happiness of the people, have been very scanty. The present general literary pursuits of the day have originated in a cynical and contemptuous spirit, which delights in the discovery of real or ideal imperfection. Those who plunge deeply into the mud of modern philosophy, being in the continual habit of reasoning abstractedly, entertain sublime ideas of moral and political excellence, which no individual, or community, is capable of reaching: hence the inordinate love of power, of money, and of selfish gratification, which they perceive to be the grand springs of human conduct, find from them no indulgent allowance; they consider not the nature of human passions,

nor the frailty of our common being; they do not reflect, that in similar situations, their own behavior might not have been more virtuous.

But whilst the mind thus broods over the enormities and oppressions of others, it accumulates a store of reflections, which will ultimately contribute to its own infelicity; for, an indignant contempt of vice, long felt, fondly cherished, and too well justified by a survey of the world, will sometimes terminate in the testy peevishness of spleen, or the cold churlishness of misanthropism.

If the happiness of society depended on the progress of political discussion, the present age must be superiorly felicitous. The ardent pursuit of enquiries concerning the nature and end of government, ought (if that truth be established which is the object

of it) to build on everlasting foundations, the fabric of human contentment. It has been asserted with confidence, and the assertion has been universally believed, that the mistakes which are the causes of human misery, are the offspring of ignorance; and that a general diffusion of knowledge is the remedy for the evil. But the discussion of political questions which by laying open the sources of truth, are said to promote the welfare of society, is perhaps the most powerful cause of these tumults which give a mortal stab to its quiet. The passions of man are so irritable, that difference of opinion on speculative politics, will stimulate the parties to decide that question by force, which reason has attempted in vain. The variety of arguments which modern learning and ingenuity are able to advance on any side of a

question, serves only to confirm the vehement mind in its previously adopted sentiments; and whenever a country is cursed with the horrors of civil war, it may generally look for the causes which produced it, in the pages of those writers who have been extolled as the enlighteners of the world, as promoters of the truth, and consequently as increasing the sum of human happiness.

The same restless activity which disposes the mind to engage itself in political discussions, will frequently stimulate it to reduce its theories into practice. It has been affirmed, that sparks of truth are generated by that collision of intellect which takes place by the universal agitation of opinion. Locke has been said to have established axioms as true respecting mind, as Newton has concerning matter;

but this assertion is vague and unphilosophical ; natural truths being chiefly objects of sense, may be reduced by observation and experiment, to the unerring standard of truth ; but moral movements, depending entirely on the infinite variations of a machine acted upon by a thousand fluctuating springs, cannot be reduced to any fixed rule, which may *positively* be termed that of right. The idea of political or moral rectitude, as opposed to that of error, must be infinitely various in any community ; and perhaps this idea may be somewhat different in every mind, at least in some of the lighter shades, so that strictly speaking, there may be as many political opinions in a state, as there are individuals who compose it.

Who then will have the confidence to affirm that he alone is right ? Is the pro-

pagation of opinion a pure and legitimate reason for the employment of force ? The universal consent of modern philosophers has deprecated the sword as a converter of infidels to the true religious faith,—yet modern philosophers scruple not to defend the equity of commotion, to attain a political good. Are our earthly concerns of so much more moment than our heavenly ones, that peace and life is esteemed as a trifling risque in one case, and as too much to be hazarded in the slightest degree in the other ?

Literature* has been considered as the grand source whence all improvements derive their origin ; and improvement and felicity are generally connected in the

* See Godwin's enquiry concerning Political Justice, where this point is strenuously insisted on.

minds of the Literati, (however their own experience might dictate a different language) but Literature has not amended the situation of the bulk of the people; it has communicated a keener sense of the miseries of poverty. Collation of sentiment has not produced universal conviction, but it has increased the fervor of opposition, and deepened the animosities of mankind.

Science may have enlarged our stock of pleasures and conveniences; but these advantages are the lot only of the chosen few. It has produced misery to its professors; there is not in general a more jealous, envious, and unhappy race of men, than that of the professed Literati; their propensity to hypothesis, and obstinacy in defending it, their usual singularity and eccentricity in the affairs of common life,

their very success or failure exposes them to enmity and detraction, or ridicule and mortification. How was the amiable NEWTON pained, amidst all his greatness, by the persevering opposition of HOOK.

Knowledge, by increasing sensibility, bares the heart to the arrows of misery; very few are the histories of eminent literary characters, which are not catalogues of their sorrows: the general diffusion of learning may have had some influence in humanizing the heart, but it has been unfavorable to general union, to fraternal love, to charity, to meekness, to humility, to every virtue which our religion enjoins, and to the generality of those feelings which constitute the happiness of mankind.

History informs us that improvements in science have not meliorated those evils

which arise from the indulgence of the passions. Every great and important introduction of the most apparent salutary truths, has invaded the personal felicity of man. The rise of commerce, the abolition of the feudal and monastic systems, has impoverished the lowest orders of society, in a degree which no legal assistance can redress; the reformation ushered in with blood and persecution, engendered a spirit of bigotry, narrowness of mind, and intolerance, which ended in a toleration that has perpetuated a variety of sects, not generally unwilling, on the removal of legal restraints, to persecute each other. The expulsion of the Stuarts, though highly necessary, and perfectly just, has been the parent of a grand division of the state into two parties, cherishing mutual enmity, hatred, and animosity towards

each other. This single event has engendered invasion, rebellion, and exile. The promulgation of modern republican opinions has spread turbulence, murder, riot, and sedition, throughout society. Nor has science, with all its boasted eulogiums, introduced a single truth of moment, either civil or religious, but its progress has been marked with persecution, disorder, and misery; has sown the seeds of strife and alienation between man and man. The pride of science has generated such a spirit of inflexible reverence for abstract system and opinion, as will sacrifice its most solid possessions of comfort and tranquillity, with all the zeal of martyrdom; it has utterly destroyed the benign influence of benevolence, and has made the reciprocation of concession the most difficult of all things.

If science has enlightened and improved us, its effects are not unsimilar to those which took place at the promulgation of the Gospel in Mexico by the *Spaniards*; it did not increase the stock of virtues, but it created a number of crimes,

The discovery and publication of a religious or political truth, is the instant signal of contention; virulence of language, ridicule, personal insults, frequently mingle themselves in these violent but unprofitable disputes. The temporal interest of men sometimes suffer from the effects of the controversy, but their peace of mind seldom escapes a wound.

The history of the progress of Christianity, from the time of Constantine, is a perfect Newgate Calendar; from the fourth century to the papal reign, it consists of proscriptions, exiles, and murder: under

the pontificates of oppressive tyranny over those nations who submitted to the spiritual empire, which was upheld by every trick of fraudulent swindling. Nor does the reformed æra present a much fairer prospect; for here we meet with revenge, penal severities, and persecution. The histories (many of them melancholy ones) of a few pious, learned, and excellent men alone relieve this disgraceful picture. The court of Inquisition is a horrid institution, a reproach to human nature, a terrible engine of ecclesiastical vengeance, and directly opposite to the spirit of christianity. But I should be inclined to doubt whether the catalogue of the miseries it has inflicted on mankind, is either so long or so dreadful, as that which exists in those countries which have rejected the institution with abhorrence.—When will the genius of the

religion of Jesus be better understood?—
When will its history become more respectable?

These observations on the effects of science, are by no means digressive; for every thing which constitutes the felicity of man, as far as it is derived from political institutions, is supposed to owe its origin to the progress of knowledge;—an axiom of unmixed error.

Nor will it unfrequently be found, that the same disposition which stimulates the understanding to apply itself to nice speculations concerning those rights which equity claims for man, which arduously struggles to reduce its theories to practice, is composed of materials, which in the mingled commerce of human life, will often destroy its own felicity; in such an active mind we may sometimes distinguish

a conceit of the superiority of its discriminating faculties, a sovereign contempt for the understandings of others, an invincible pride, which disdains to submit to the decisions of authority, and an inflexible obstinacy, which refuses to surrender an atom of its rights to gratify the prejudices of ignorance. When these propensities pervade the private conduct of man, and diffuse themselves through the affairs of common life; the unaccording passions of others will frequently involve their possessor in many unpleasant, and many disagreeable situations.

That violence which sometimes inflames the mind, when its whole faculties are employed in defence of system, is equally absurd and presumptuous; it can be defended on no other ground but that of infallibility. The rage for controversy has

opened the sluices of the ferocious passions, and poured the scalding torrent over every tender plant of humanity. Man, in the pursuit of a multiplicity of rights, sometimes undefinable, frequently impracticable, and often contradictory to each other, has forgot the practice of his plainest duties,—Justice and Benevolence.

The influence of the philosophical spirit on the condition of the inferior orders of society, will not appear to be favorable; for no consideration is allowed in the modern system of manners, for the social wants of man, the indulgence of which is almost exclusively confined to the fortunate children of wealth. The labourer is six days employed in incessant toil, and the seventh he ought not to be *permitted* to pervert. The diffusion of knowledge may have enlightened his understanding, and

given more expansion to his reason ; but plain reason is an unamiable puritan, that seldom allows an excuse for the pleasurable wants of human kind. The ancient system of labor was similar to a school, not where the obdurate master imposes continual restraints, but where the more humane and wiser preceptor permits frequent and amusing relaxations.

True it is, that the pursuits of commerce, and the assistance which they have received from the labors of philosophy, have evidenced the avenue to the temple of riches ; but situations of independance, much less those of opulence, few can hope to attain. The felicity of the bulk of society must arise from other causes than the profundity of philosophical discussion, the daring enterprizes of speculative avarice, or the fopperies of fashion generated by vicious opu-

lence ; it must spring from an easy means of obtaining a security from the immediate demands of hunger and nakedness, from frequent relaxations of labor, (for rest is an enjoyment peculiar to the *natural* state of man*) and from a cultivation of the social principle ; we may despise the village dances of the old French Peasantry, or the musical pleasures of the Italian, or the Savoyard ; yet great would be the difficulty in proving that they did not chiefly contribute to their happiness.

We have lost the barbarity of the feudal system, but we are plunged into a refinement no less barbarous, because it is more unnatural, and more destructive of human

* All Savages hate toil, and place happiness in inaction.

Tench's Port Jackson, p. 188.

felicity ; a refinement, which by the wants it creates, has engendered a sordid avarice, which swallows up every generous emotion of the soul, and damps that vivid flame of charity and beneficence, which has frequently shot a radiant lustre on a dark and barbarous age.

To the amiable and benevolent Knight of Chivalry, we oppose the spiritualized Philosophy of the present day, who endeavours to realize abstract truths, without regard to relative circumstances, who brings into life a defiance of the established homages of mankind, and a passion for innovation and experiment. Very amiable and excellent is that philosophy which is employed in correcting its own character ; but the spirit of modern system takes an intellectual direction only, and extends no farther than opinion.

Yes.—The characteristics which distinguish the manners of former days from those of the present, are widely different. On one side we behold a dignified honor, which avoided the appearance of meanness; on the other we view every noble principle sacrificed on the altar of Plutus; there we perceive a dignified decorum, and a strictness of manners, which exalted the character; here a general profligacy of conduct, which levels that character to the dust; there we discover a refined attachment, which while it professed to defend, contributed to preserve the chastity of females; here an unmanly triumph in the destruction of that honour, which ought to be protected at the hazard of life; one side of the picture presents the brilliant and steady light of an ardent and sincere devotion, the other exhibits the sombrous shade

of open impiety, or of cold infidelity. There we may contemplate the refreshing streams of benevolence, which wandered in a thousand channels; here we view wealth stagnate in a corrupting and useless reservoir.

To meliorate the state of man, should be the object of true philosophy and of just legislation. The labors of useful science should be immediately directed to this grand point; but until we have an accurate conception of and a cordial esteem for those social fundamentals, which can alone form a durable basis to a benevolent system, a malignant spirit of discord will counteract every attempt at harmonious effect; until then we shall not possess faculties to enjoy or to endure that liberty which a fertile imagination can warmly conceive, and of which every recluse student easily forms the

theoretical limits. But whilst we are thus speculating in the most sanguine anticipation of the progress of improvement and a future superior character in man, experience strongly asserts, that general rights must be extorted by violence, and secured by coercion, and that coercion destroys the liberty it would secure.

Such is the nature of human affairs, that evils of the most momentous concern, are consequences of what are deemed our greatest blessings. Philosophy by subtilizing the plainest truths, by frittering morality and policy into a thousand useless parts, has volatilized that understanding which it professed to enlighten. Exalted reason fertilizes resource, widens the sphere of power, and disarms fortune of its capriciousness; but to machiavellian policy has ever been united, uncontrolled ambition, extortionate

villainy, and suppressed humanity ! Liberty in its most equitable dispensations by conferring eternity of duration upon contending interests and personal alienations, diminishes the sum of general power. Disinterested public conduct is only compatible with simple habits, un aspiring moderation, and satisfied necessities ; but the voluptuous ease and the gratifying power of wealth will ever find an interest in the perpetuation of old, and the creation of new abuses, will render the admission of virtue into practical politics, absolutely impossible. Religion will dictate a pure morality, and patriotism a virtue of character, to which commerce, luxury, and avarice, will ever oppose their more potent attractions ; and though trade and manufacture, by the indispensable necessity they create of protection and security, have formed a pacific

character unknown to the feudal ages ; yet ability of defence is thereby enfeebled, and national welfare entrusted to the precarious honor of a mercenary army ; but the virtues of our rulers must in free and despotic states, be the main foundation upon which political good can be built, for constitutions and rights, in the view of public benefit, are insecure formularies, which the virtues of a WASHINGTON may support, or the vices of a ROBESPIERRE destroy, but as a display of imperfections often intuitively suggests the remedies which are proper to correct them, we may learn not *always* to account constitutional integrity the prudish affectation of political puritanism.

It cannot be denied but that the habit of contemplating the progress of liberty and science may suggest plausible and animating

hopes of enlarging the happiness of mankind, but the human character from the influences of causes which will ever exist is not susceptible of complete and lasting modification to the precepts of abstracted system; we know that Empires have their dates as well as men; that as the mind becomes vitiated by the indulgence of its luxuries, that as the body more rapidly decays in proportion as it has rioted in sensualities, so must kingdoms whose restraints are removed, where opinion roves free and uncontrolled, hasten speedily to their decline; that the light of the new philosophy and the grand discovery of human rights have probably accelerated the progress of national debasement. They have taken a curb from the mouth of a restive and vicious animal, which can alone prevent him from rushing towards the

precipice, and plunging into the waves of destruction.

But (we shall be asked) is error to be perpetuated? are we to discountenance the pursuits of literature, and discourage the discoveries of science? he would certainly appear rash and presumptuous, who should attempt to sever from the political body those adventitious ramifications which have shot themselves into its vital parts, and given a bias to its temperament, and which it must continue to support. Convinced as we are of the baneful effects of the mighty career of knowledge in the final result, we must still exclaim with all the honesty and fervor of a deep-rooted enthusiasm, let the progress of science and of liberty be rapid, and let their foundations be strong, even though like the hero of Israel seated between the pillars of national

happiness they pull it down to the very ground.

But perhaps we may conclude that the violent contentions which take place on abstract points, and which too often produce the most dreadful convulsions in society, are absolutely necessary to complete the general scheme of the oeconomy of the universe; to fulfil the decrees of that awful being whose designs are inscrutable to human wisdom. That it is not in nature that an Empire should have an uniform state of existence for any length of time, and that it is still less natural that improvement should be so progressive as to secure the moral or political happiness of man; that history (which teaches more in a single page, than a thousand systems of those adventurous speculatists who launch into the wide ocean of opinion without

chart or compass) will inform us that Kingdoms have diverged towards dissolution by the very causes which their inhabitants imagined would have secured their existence forever.

END OF VOL. I.

ERRATA.

Page 12—last line. “ *Enthusiasm occupied by superstition.*” It should have been—*Enthusiasm filled that place in the mind which was formerly occupied by superstition.*

Page 96 is wrong paged, it is now 70.

Page 166—line 2. s left out of the word *cumbrous*.

Page 220—line 12. Instead of “evidenced” read *widened*.

Page 222—line 10. Instead of “philosophy” read *philosopher*.